TWO FACES OF INDIRA GANDHI

By the Same Author

Indira Gandhi—Revolution in Restraint

Two Faces of Indira Gandhi

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Preface

"Everybody is speaking the truth, but at the wrong time!" exclaimed a Congress leader at the meeting of the All India Congress committee, in a post mortem session after their astounding defeat That just about sums it up

I was shocked at the truth It was easy for those opposed to Indira Gandhi from the very start to believe the worst It was difficult for those who had faith in her to face it

The period till 1972 was the theme of my first book on Indira Gandhi The period since then, which initiated the trends leading to the emergency forms the theme of this one Between the two books as between one face of Indira Gandhi and the other lies a lost connection

Indira Gandhi is not a simple woman, nor was the office she held Each issue which has cropped up during the writing of this book merits a separate analysis I have sought to relate them to one driving passion of Indira Gandhi, that may bind them together Politics? Love? Ideology? Fear? Ego? Motherhood? Ambition? What it is depends on where the reader looks For

me it was like unravelling a mystery that baffled her nearest colleagues as well as her profoundest enemies

I have based this book on the live but historic material *provided by the top leadership of the Congress and its workers* They are perhaps the only ones to know the truth about Indira Gandhi

I wish to thank them all for talking to me at length and with the perception that gave the clue to what happened to Mrs Gandhi As her old colleague and political stalwart Kamlapati Tripathi says ' Here was a person who was flying in the air and is now in the dust adulated in the capitals of the world, but now abused by the very persons she created out of nothing ' The story becomes both human and political

The name of Jayaprakash Narayan has been left with sub conscious oversight among the list of names referred to as the opposition elite which was still in jail in June 1976 Narayan was released on parole in November 1975, and the rest at varying intervals Probably the sub conscious worked here all the way through for nobody could refer to the opposition elite without including his name

I am grateful to my parents and my sister for their faith to LK for the ready help facts and material to the little Kamia for her patience—and above all to the absent Raka for giving me the determination

Sudarshan Seth and Neelima Goel spent long hours finding *details for the exhaustive notes which were planned to form* virtually a short parallel history throughout the book

Hari Ram Jindal did a stoic job with the typing for which I owe him thanks too

The rest is legion

New Delhi
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For a name to live by
RAKA

1 The Men in Her Politics

Sitting out in the political cold in the hills of Pachmarhi in June 1976, six hundred miles away from India's capital, Pandit Dwarka Prasad Mishra [1] Indira Gandhi s master tactician and confidant in her battle for intra party supremacy in 1967 69 related an anecdote to an administrator friend calling on him ' There was a political prisoner I knew in the thirties who was so fond of his pet cat that he was allowed to keep it with him in his cell One day his nerves cracked and he beat the cat blue The cat sat cowering in a corner not knowing where to turn for the cell door was locked and it was trapped Each time its one time protector would come near it would shrink against the wall and whimper The jailor heard the cries and came running As soon as the cell door flew open, the cat, instead of rushing out, leapt at her owner s throat in such ferocious anger that he nearly died before they could release its grip The moral of the story is,' said Mishra as

[1] D P Mishra was a controversial pol tical figure in Madhya Pradesh politics whose rise and fall as chief minister determined political alignments in the state Now seventy-six years old he came back to Delhi after Mrs Gandhi s defeat to play a crucial role in her battle for post-election survival.

his tiny eyes gleamed behind his glasses, 'that if you want to hit the enemy, you must leave a way out for him Otherwise his despair can make him a killer "

The reference was Maoist but the application was nearer home It was one year since Indira Gandhi had declared in internal emergency in India on 26 June 1975 The opposition elite was still in jail including such big names as Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai Atal Behari Vajpayee, Raj Narain, L K Advani, and Piloo Mody—together with men from her own Congress Party like Chandra Shekhar Mohan Dharia Krishan Kant Ram Dhan, and P N Singh Censorship of the media was still in force Argument and dissent were mouthed in whispers while rumour aggravated fear The politician and the intellectual subsisted in uneasy confrontation, the area of direct knowledge became narrower and narrower and truth seemed to have more than the seven colours of the rainbow

Obviously Mishra thought ' Indiraji was pushing the situation too hard

But by then he was, in many ways, too far away from her to communicate either his protest or his apprehensions His rapport with the prime minister had broken in 1972 when he found him self being cleverly edged out of the orbits of confidence It had been a typical manoeuvre in which Indira Gandhi s lieutenants did for her what she had wanted done There had never been so many dropouts from the coterie of confidants until then What happened to him set the pattern Why it happened provides some clues to the later metamorphosis of her personality and that of the Indian political system itself

Mishra was chief minister of Madhya Pradesh from 1965 to 1967 Later resident in Delhi he was one of the few people in the period between 1967 and 1972 who acquired the reputation of being close to the prime minister That in itself became one factor of disqualification in her eyes The second was the growing feeling in the capital that Mishra was becoming ambitious enough to aspire for home ministership in the union cabinet That was reason enough to cut him down to size The third was that he was prepared for a direct confrontation with the communists at a time when Mrs Gandhi was going through a very enthusiastic Left phase Anybody who differed became suspect

When the central election committee was selecting candidates

for assembly elections in 1972, Mishra made it very clear that he was opposed to Congress supporting Sudhir Mukherjee, the communist candidate from Raipur He even suggested there be a rule that no communist candidate be encouraged in areas positioned with vital installations Raipur, for instance, was the district adjoining Drug where the Bhilai steel plant was in operation 'That is when these people came to know that I was against them affirms Mishra Instead of taking advice from former friends, she had begun to listen to Kumaramangalam[2] But where was the need to go out of the party to get leftist thinkers? We had them all—even Chavan,[3] earlier, and there were young enthusiastic people like Chandra Shekhar[4] Mishra thought her image was being denigrated by communist propaganda spreading at the time that she did whatever they told her

But there was a fourth factor By 1972 Mishra was beginning to get suspicious of Haryana Chief Minister Bansi Lal's[5] role He warned Indira Gandhi that he feared the rugged *jat's* intelligence network spreading its tentacles into her own house "For a politician truth and facts are impossible to disregard

[2]Mohan Kumaramangalam, the tall slim suave card holder of the Communist Party of India joined the Congress and became union minister of steel and mines in Mrs Gandhi's cabinet A clever political theorist, he died in an air crash in 1973 at the age of fifty-eight.

[3]Yeshwantrao Balwantrao Chavan is the sixty five years old strong man of Maharashtra who has kept his hold in his home state through years of power at the Centre under Nehru Shastri and Indira Gandhi His heavy looks belie an ability for perceptive analysis and once he begins to talk, the range is vast. He was minister for external affairs till the Congress downfall on 20 March 1977

[4]Born in 1927 Chandra Shekhar the lanky bearded firebrand formed Indira Gandhi's group of radicals within the Congress in 1969 called the Young Turks He belongs to eastern UP edits *Young Indian* (a fortnightly journal) and was jailed as a Congressman along with Jayaprakash Narayan on 25 June He was recently elected chairman of the newly formed Janata Party

[5]A ruthless *jat* from Haryana Bansi Lal wears spectacles which cannot hide the rugged handsomeness of his features His political style as chief minister was aimed at fulfilling two purposes—to give Haryana as well as himself a place in the sun He has a total disregard for the means he employs to achieve his objectives he shuns theory and prefers to steam roll through men and ideas A man whose blind loyalty can be as dangerous as his total hostility Bansi Lal was union minister of defence till 20 March 1977

She and I had one agreement 'I ll tell you the most unpleasant things,' I said to her, but I ll never ask why you haven t done *this or that* ' When I realized, said Mishra ' *that unpleasant* facts were becoming unwelcome I left.'

Not the Allahabad high court judgement on 12 June 1975, which placed her election into jeopardy * nor the emergency on 26 June 1975 which brought her democratic credibility into question, nor even the political birth with that of Sanjay Gandhi as the prime ministerial alter ego were the watersheds in the life and politics of Indira Gandhi It was 1971 the year of her own birth as political leader, when she stepped out of the Nehru shadow, when she felt she could deal with men—like Mishra—who had served under her father in her own right according to her own needs and according to her own style *I would support* her right up to the split in 1969 completely Before that she was not her own master in the organization or the Lok Sabha said D P Mishra But one can carry that support right through the consolidation of her party in 1970 the calculated victory over the question of Bangladesh to the fantastic mandate of the 1971 parliamentary elections and the assembly elections in 1972

But there were two ways for her to react to this achievement She could have gained such confidence that it could have made her generous and large hearted Instead she became jealous and fearful

If she had turned the other way at that point she could have been like Nehru I suppose, I said in a discussion later

*Justice Jag Mohan Lal Sinha of the Allahabad high court held Indira Gandhi guilty of corrupt practices in her election to the Lok Sabha from Rae Bareli in 1971 (on a petition filed by her opponent Raj Narain which took four years to be decided) Sinha cited the use of gazetted officers of the state government of UP under section 123(7) of the *Representation of People s Act* and obtaining the assistance of Mr Yashpal Kapoor a gazetted officer in the government of India holding the post of officer on special duty in the prime minister s secretariat for the furtherance of her election prospects, as a corrupt practice under section 123(7) of the same act two reasons which disqualified her from holding elective office for a period of six years Sinha then granted her a stay of twenty days to enable her to appeal to the supreme court

Indira Gandhi had in that election defeated Raj Narain by over one lakh votes and led the Congress to a massive victory The Congress won 361 seats in the Lok Sabha out of a total of 524

'Greater than Nehru," said Chandrajit Yadav,[7] former minister of steel in Indira's ministry, "but she never had the principled approach and humanism of Nehru"

In Nehru the confidence was inborn In Indira, it was the insecurity Nothing else explains the ideological drift of the years after a solid political achievement like Bangladesh on the international front, and the support that became manifestly hers on the domestic one Contained in both these successes was the germ of fear Suddenly there was too much at stake for her, and it had to be jealously protected From 1969 to 1972 she had little to lose because she was fighting a cause From 1972 to 1977 she had everything to lose because she was safeguarding the establishment

Indira Gandhi s style did not change It was her emphasis which did

Mrs Gandhi did plan towards central authority but not towards dictatorship " analyzes Chandra Shekhar, now president of the Janata Party, but at that time an emerging Young Turk in the prime minister s effort to fashion a leftist orientation ' She had a peculiar sense of insecurity The first symptoms were there long before when she began to move away from Ashok Mehta[8] Soon after 1967 she became suspicious of people who had a standing in public life When the cabinet was formed Ashok Mehta was not willing to join at first because she did not consult her own colleagues even about their portfolios She's always playing with three or four ideas at the same time Then she sees which one is the most feasible and acts upon it If she has to take an unpleasant decision it is not on ethical grounds In the presidential elections in 1969, I was in favour of supporting Mr

[7]Forty seven years old Chandrajit Yadav is an eloquent politician who graduated into the Congress from the inner enclave of the Communist Party of India and became a leading figure of the Left group within the Congress besides its general secretary He was union minister of steel and mines till 20 March 1977

[8]Ashok Mehta sports the intellectual look with thick glasses and a not so well trimmed beard He came in from the Socialist Party to become the leading economic theoretician of the Congress He formed a close political threesome with Chavan and Indira Gandhi till gradual disenchantment led him finally to opt for the Congress Organization

Giri[9] from the beginning but she preferred to prevaricate outwardly'

'It started from the time of the split"[10] says Dinesh Singh[11] also former foreign minister in Indira's cabinet and now a member of the Janata Party "My idea was that she should not have accepted Sanjeeva Reddy[12] We could have taken the same decision without her agreeing to his candidature I was opposed to the split Then, where was the point in throwing out Morarji?[13] He had accepted being number two to her he was disciplined enough to work with her whatever his ambitions

[9]Labour leader Varaha Giri Venkata Giri was union minister vice president, then elected president of India in 1969 He stood as an independent but with the implicit support of Indira Gandhi against Sanjeeva Reddy the official Congress nominee who was being supported by the old party bosses Use your conscience! called Mrs Gandhi to the electorate and Giri s victory proved the supremacy of her support.

[10]The Congress Party split occurred over the question of Giri s election But the real issues were Mrs Gandhi s bid for total control the Left Right confrontation and the declared aim to give a fresh image to the Congress The Syndicate, as the group of big bosses were called broke apart to form the rival Congress Organization which they kept insisting was the real Congress But the majority in the party and in the country as a whole stood by Indira Gandhi

[11]The raja of Kalakankar (a princely state in UP) fifty two years old Dinesh Singh lost his privy purse and privileges like the rest of India s feudal order in 1969 in one of the acts of parliament which along with the nationalization of banks contributed to Mrs Gandhi s reputation as the leader of the masses She gave Dinesh Singh the top assignment of minister of external affairs in 1969 only to bring him down from that position later He joined the Janata Party in May 1977

[12]Sanjeeva Reddy now sixty four was Congress president Lok Sabha speaker and India s presidential candidate in 1969 The wheel has turned full circle

[13]Morarji Desai the stoic puritan from Gujarat who was Nehru s colleague and went on to become finance minister and deputy prime minister under Indira Gandhi in 1976 Theirs was an old rivalry keen and continuous. She threw him out in 1969 He remained leader of the Congress Organization in parliament and joined with Jayaprakash Narayan on the issues of the dissolution of assemblies and the total revolution agitation of 1974 He was arrested on 25 June 1975 and came out nineteen months later to fulfil the aim he never gave up He had the satisfaction of seeing Indira Gandhi and her party routed in the elections in 1977 and his own position as prime minister secured by consent in the Janata Party Morarji Desai is eighty-one as spartan as ever except for a weakness for Swiss chocolates In jail he subsisted on dry fruit and milk.

His regime has not yet shown the expected puritanical tendencies his years it seems have mellowed him.

I was in America at the time When I came back I told her I didn t agree with this decision The Congress (O) was dubbed a rightist group, but when did Morarji ever block any legislation? It was to assert her supremacy, that was the reason "

"Why should you have continued to support her then?" I asked Dinesh Singh

' Indiraji was still fresh, people responded to the generation question You can take one wrong decision—after all, it was her right to make that choice—but when she represented modern trends argued for changes in the country and a movement towards socialism you had to support her "

Dinesh Singh too was ultimately eased out, partly for the same reasons She had placed him in an exalted position as foreign minister in 1969 70, out of proportion to the political backing he could muster However, she started suspecting him when he tried to organize a base for himself in UP with the help of the other Rajput MLAs Himself a member of the Kitchen Cabinet an earlier version of the later caucus, he came into clash with the one man centre of power who was functioning non officially on her behalf even then—her private secretary, Yashpal Kapoor,[14] full of bounce bluster and loyalty, who exercised an influence which percolated down from ministerial levels to the very roots of the Congress organization Even as early as 1963 says Kapoor there were attempts at creating misunderstandings amongst her close supporters Dinesh Singh, for instance, rang him up one day

Kapoor you and I are in such a position we have to be careful where we go who we meet,' warned the ex raja of Kalakankar

"What on earth?

[14]Born in 1929 Yashpal Kapoor hails from Peshawar in the North West Frontier Province of what is now Pakistan, and came to Delhi in 1945 He used to sell newspapers and sit at a shop in Subzi Mandi selling vegetables in the mornings and evenings During the day he worked as a special police officer In 1946 I became an active Seva Dal member " he recalls I used to carry a flag and a bugle through which I cal ed to people to donate four *annas* to the Congress' Kapoor s unbounding energy and efficient zest carried him, finally, as stenographer and typist to the Nehru he hero-worshipped He worked with Mrs Gandhi in 1956 and rose to meteoric heights as her unofficial emissary for Congress affairs when she became prime minister The rank he attained was that of under secretary Since he became member of the Rajya Sabha his influence waned, his place being taken up by his cousin R.K. Dhawan

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"It seems you were found dead drunk at the Ashoka Hotel'

Till then, says Kapoor, he had never been to the Ashoka Hotel In 1967, when Indira Gandhi came back as prime minister after the election, Dinesh Singh and Inder Gujral[15] the then minister of state for communications and parliamentary affairs began to play him down They certainly tried to cut me after that If the PM suggested that I could be sent to talk to somebody like I did before they'd say No, no he s only a private secretary, why not send another man? ' All three continued to operate in fitful collaboration till Kapoor found an occasion to hit back by getting evidence of Dinesh Singh s supposedly conspiratorial ambitions He tried desperately one day to locate him on behalf of the prime minister and finally got him on the telephone late in the evening

Maharaj " said Kapoor, Where does one find you? We haven t been able to get you anywhere today We ve been calling you several times from here

Are (alas) who calls whom till he has a strong base rejoined Dinesh Singh cynically and then added I have to build some support for myself in UP now

Dinesh Singh s reputation for being close to Indira Gandhi held a connotation different from that of Mishra s but the as pirations to power became just as suspect Kapoor presumably took the opportunity to warn her against Dinesh cornering the vital most populous prime ministerial ground of UP from where all of India s prime ministers had come till then Perhaps also the consciousness of her being a woman worked psychologi

[15]Inder Kumar Gujral fifty seven years old comes from a family of politi cians. His father was a member of the Pakistan parliament and after partition was given a seat in lieu of this in the Punjab Inder Gujral was a member of the All India Students Federation the student communist wing in Lahore He joined Congress only to be imprisoned in the Quit India movement In Delhi however he won his way up through the vice-presidentship of the New Delhi municipal committee and established contacts with Nehru and Indira through the art world Satish Gujral his famous artist brother was the first to have been granted repeated sittings by Nehru and Indira during 1956-57 When Satish completed Indira s portrait he remarked to Pandit Nehru that he feared the latter would not hang it on the wall in his house as lots of friends had commented that Satish had made Indira look too ruthless An artist s job is to unmask the truth, not mask it " Nehru had said I think what you have done is right."

cally at least in one respect, despite her repeated assertions that she should always be thought of "as a person," for she certainly dropped the political men in her life with impunity

The third factor which Dinesh Singh had in common with Mishra was that by arguing in favour of retaining Morarji Desai in the cabinet, he immediately got himself an anti Left colouring He had no occasion at that time to offend her with possible warnings on Sanjay s role *But in 1970 his status was devalued when* he was given the less prestigious ministry of industrial development and internal trade, and when he was finally dropped from the cabinet in 1971 In fact the coldness was so palpable and the confrontation so tense that he was suspended from the party and expected to be expelled from the Congress on an issue for which he had to almost offer an apology

Inder Kumar Gujral was again picked by Indira Gandhi as a politically non based entity from the vice presidentship of the New Delhi municipal committee, because of his personal allegiance to her when she was minister of information and broadcasting in Shastri s cabinet, and also later, in the dramatic struggle for power against Morarji Desai Gujral is a liberal, slow moving but imaginative man who thinks in terms of concepts The media is his medium In 1965 66, he and Romesh Thapar, the editor of *Seminar* used to work out plans to create media consciousness as a broad policy measure and feed her with their ideas That was the time when as minister of information and broadcasting Mrs Gandhi came up with her one *hundred crore rupee scheme for television* and met with various hurdles on finance allocations because Shastri did not want her to grow too big However she instituted the Chanda Committee to work out the possibility of creating an autonomous corporation for All India Radio as part of her repeated affirmations that she wanted diversity of expression As soon as she became prime minister recalls Inder Gujral ' she made it very clear that AIR should function as a government medium

By then Gujral had himself been appointed minister of information and broadcasting by Mrs Gandhi He *went on to make* the radio a campaign instrument of such force in the crucial presidential election of 1969 that it virtually controlled the outcome in Giri s—and therefore Mrs Gandhi s—favour It was an image building exercise patterned on the ruthless, soul condi

tioning efficiency of western methods, as one politician admits it "virtually hypnotized society" Those who did not shout a slogan felt left out or were edged out Gujral was termed the Goebbles of the Indian scene much before Vidya Charan Shukla[14] earned this encomium years later in 1975, and All India Radio began to be called All Indira Radio by the opposition within and outside the Congress

But Indira Gandhi came out for the vast majority of the Indian public as the epitome of the democratic Left

In any history of this period, comments a colleague of Gujral (now on the opposite side of the fence) ' Gujral is one man who can be held responsible for creating her But even he was brought down!

Indira Gandhi had no rea on to fear Gujral But there were complaints that he was appearing too often on television himself and building his own image Besides he had continued his association with Dinesh Singh who by 1971 was out and out of favour Finally Gujral was beginning to play it cool—politically—with the medium after 1969 and not doing what she wanted faithfully enough Perhaps having won her the battle over the media in 1969 he wanted to live it down and give non political creative effort a natural boost As a result he was turned out of broadcasting and appointed minister of state for housing

The choice of ministry had a background—which reveals that Indira forgets nothing When she first wanted to induct Gujral into the government in 1967 she had asked him which ministry he would prefer ' Anything but housing he had replied Gujral did not want to be associated with any position in which he could be blamed for favouring Satish Gujral, his famous artist

[14] Vidya Charan Shukla fifty tall and vain has grown into politics with power as his background His father Ravi Shankar Shukla was chief minister of Madhya Pradesh in Nehru s time as was his elder brother Shyama Charan Shukla under Mrs Gandhi s rule Vidya Charan became minister of state for defence production in Mrs Gandhi s government Power was so neatly divided between the two brothers in the state and at the Centre that Mrs Gandhi began to think of removing one of them from the position of eminence With the emergency however she felt it necessary to put Vidya Charan Shukla in charge of the ministry of information and broadcasting so that the media could be handled with the force that Gujral could not or was not inclined to use Vidya Charan is also referred to as *Very Chalu Shukla* for his way with women!

[illegible]ther, whose possible contracts for sculpting murals on public [illegible]ldings would somehow involve his ministry Mrs Gandhi had [illegible] asked the reason, but had obviously concluded that Gujral [illegible] housing When the time came to punish him she chose [illegible] ministry for him He thus had to join as minister of state [illegible] works and housing in 1971 Within one year, however, on [illegible] July 1972 Gujral came a cropper

The over six feet tall elegant yogi with the burnished brown [illegible] and the naked chest swathed in a milk white *dhoti*, walked [illegible] G[illegible]ral's office one day

"There's a file pending with you about my request for [illegible] real property for my yogashram," said the swami

"Yes I'm sorry we cannot do anything about it," replied G[illegible]al

"[illegible] you give me the land or I'll see you're out of the [illegible] by tomorrow!" warned the swami

"[illegible]," said Gujral, "there are rules!"

The next day, G[illegible]ral got his orders to quit and rejoin as [illegible] and broadcasting Things were never the same again [illegible] and Mrs Gandhi.

[illegible] Gandhi's reliance on the non traditional politician, [illegible] a base, and therefore, an unquestioning [illegible], and the personalization of political function [illegible] through the use of one person known as her [illegible] attributes of her style much before they [illegible] during the emergency Yashpal Kapoor was a [illegible] phenomenon, from whom his father's [illegible] Dharam,[11] merely took over The [illegible]

[illegible] from Chanyot in Sargodha, now in Pakistan. [illegible] he went through all the rigours of [illegible] to Delhi as refugees and stayed with [illegible] All India Radio as stenographer When h[illegible] [illegible] he was engaged by Railways but joined, instead [illegible] Gandhi when she was chairman of the [illegible] [illegible] at her PA [illegible]

tioning efficiency of western methods as one politician admits, it virtually hypnotized society Those who did not shout a slogan felt left out, or were edged out Gujral was termed the Goebbles of the Indian scene much before Vidya Charan Shukla[16] earned this encomium years later in 1975, and All India Radio began to be called All Indira Radio by the opposition within and outside the Congress

But Indira Gandhi came out for the vast majority of the Indian public as the epitome of the democratic Left

In any history of this period comments a colleague of Gujral (now on the opposite side of the fence) Gujral is one man who can be held responsible for creating her But even he was brought down!

Indira Gandhi had no rea on to fear Gujral But there were complaints that he was appearing too often on television himself and building his own image Besides he had continued his association with Dinesh Singh who by 1971 was out and out of favour Finally Gujral was beginning to play it cool—politically—with the medium after 1969 and not doing what she wanted faithfully enough Perhaps having won her the battle over the media in 1969 he wanted to live it down and give non political creative effort a natural boost As a result he was turned out of broadcasting and appointed minister of state for housing

The choice of ministry had a background—which reveals that Indira forgets nothing When she first wanted to induct Gujral into the government in 1967 she had asked him which ministry he would prefer Anything but housing he had replied Gujral did not want to be associated with any position in which he could be blamed for favouring Satish Gujral his famous artist

[16] Vidya Charan Shukla fifty tall and vain has grown into politics with power as his background His father Ravi Shankar Shukla was chief minister of Madhya Pradesh in Nehru s time as was his elder brother Shyama Charan Shukla under Mrs Gandhi s rule Vidya Charan became minister of state for defence *production in Mrs Gandhi s government Power was so neatly divided* between the two brothers in the state and at the Centre that Mrs Gandhi began to think of removing one of them from the position of eminence With the emergency however she felt it necessary to put Vidya Charan Shukla in charge of the ministry of information and broadcasting so that the media could be handled with the force that Gujral could not or was not inclined to use Vidya Charan is also referred to as *Very Chalu Shukla* for his way with women!

brother, whose possible contracts for sculpting murals on public buildings would somehow involve his ministry Mrs Gandhi had not asked the reason but had obviously concluded that Gujral disliked housing When the time came to punish him, she chose the same ministry for him He thus had to join as minister of state for works and housing in 1971 Within one year, however, on 24 July 1972, Gujral came a cropper

The over six feet tall elegant yogi with the burnished brown body and the naked chest swathed in a milk white *dhoti* walked into Gujral s office one day

There s a file pending with you about my request for additional property for my yogashram,' said the swami

Yes I m sorry we cannot do anything about it replied Gujral

Either you give me the land or I'll see you re out of the ministry by tomorrow! warned the swami

It s difficult,' said Gujral there are rules! '

The next day Gujral got his orders to quit and rejoin information and broadcasting Things were never the same again between him and Mrs Gandhi

Indira Gandhi s reliance on the non traditional politician, preferably without a base and therefore an unquestioning political dependant and the personalization of political functioning which evolved through the use of one person known as her special confidant were attributes of her style much before they became factors of crisis during the emergency Yashpal Kapoor was a pre emergency phenomenon from whom his father s sister's son Rajinder Kumar Dhawan [17] merely took over The role, however was identical

[17] Rajinder Kumar Dhawan is from Chanyot in Sargodha now in *Pakistan* An alert dapper young man of forty he went through all the rigours of partition In 1947 he and his family came to Delhi as refugees and stayed with the Kapoors In 1957 he joined All India *Radio* as stenographer When he passed the UPSC examination he was assigned the Railways but joined instead as personal assistant to Mrs Gandhi when she was chairman of the New York world fair authority He continued as her PA when she became minister of information and broadcasting remaining to become her additional private secretary in this capacity he earned a reputation almost akin to Kapoor s *earlier*

One can, in fact trace the pattern further back into the Nehru era when M O Mathai marched into Anand Bhavan[18] in Allahabad one day in 1946 Carrying a bag and a trunkful of papers, Mathai offered his services free to Jawaharlal Nehru then only a private citizen 'I have enough to eat and live by' said the man from Kerala, 'I don t want any money' His efficiency as a stenographer won Nehru over completely while his devotion to him when he became India s first prime minister brought in the power Barring three of four ministers who walked into Nehru s room without reserve the others went through Mathai and sometimes only to him to get their work done Mathai would be at his table in a room at Teen Murti House[19] by 8 am he would go to office with Nehru in the car come back with him and be available at any time the buzzer went right till 12 30 or 1 am until Nehru himself retired Uncompromising in the meticulousness with which he matched timings with the prime minister Mathai was equally fearless about ticking him off for the vagaries of his colleagues and relatives—and even for the prime minister s own lapses He once sent Nehru a note pointing out that his own sister, Vijayalaxmi Pandit[20] while on an economy

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as her right hand man during the emergency The best period of one s life says Dhawan is between twenty three and forty That I ve spent here! He resigned from government service on 21 March and continues to work for Mrs Gandhi in her new capacity as private citizen

[18]Anand Bhavan the palatial home of the Nehrus in Allahabad which Mrs Gandhi has bequeathed to the nation

[19]Teen Murti House the imposing residence of the British commanders in chief which became the residence of India s first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru It is now a museum which draws hundreds of curious tourists every day The compound outside houses the Nehru Museum and the Nehru Memorial Library

[20]The beauteous *Nan* to her brother Jawaharlal Nehru who was twelve years her senior Vijayalaxmi Pandit became minister in UP in the Congress ministries in 1937 She was India s first woman high commissioner and ambassador to the UK US and the USSR the first woman president of the United Nations general assembly and governor of Maharashtra Her brilliant career petered out into a cynical hostility towards her niece who as prime minister refused to forgive her aunt s treatment of Kamala her mother Indira never forgot the past Vijayalaxmi had to cool her heels—politically—and she finally decided to retire She came in to support the new opposition in 1977 at a critical point in the anti Indira wave which gave a moral boost to the movement

ticket for a private visit home from London (where she was high commissioner) made the airline vacate three seats in a row for her "This is very wrong" wrote Mathai loftily to the prime minister On another occasion when Nehru appointed Krishna Menon minister without portfolio, Mathai called it unfair in a note to the prime minister, saying that the appointment had had a very demoralizing effect on Menon He even chastised the prime minister for talking too long to a lady at a reception because 'it was not done for a prime minister to give too much importance to any single individual

But Mathai did not function independent of his environment as messenger emissary negotiator and conciliator, as Kapoor and Dhawan did under Mrs Gandhi Though there were rumblings in the political and administrative cadres about the importance of Mathai, there was less bitterness because political or administrative authority itself was not questioned

It is only when the system and the hierarchies get a buffeting that a subversive strain begins to run through governance and weakens its sinews Such was Mrs Gandhi s reliance on Kapoor that at one point he could function with more authority than a state chief minister, or at least he was in a position to make or mar the image of a politician in the eyes of the prime minister He could not get off cheaply himself because as in the case of Gujral and Dinesh Singh, when they could feed her with their own interpretations directly he had to suffer in consequence But he did contribute to Dinesh Singh s discomfiture and gradually, Gujral too found himself at a discount.

But who was this swami? Where had he come from? What hold could he have on the prime minister to influence her in changing the portfolios of her ministerial colleagues—or even induct others like L N Mishra[11] at one point and that too with such promptness?

[11]Short, fat and rotund with a neck lost in folds of flesh Lalit Narain Mishra was brought into the limelight to offset Jagjivan Ram s influence in Bihar Mishra was one of those who apparently did all he could for Maruti Close to both mother and son he became one of the inner coterie. He was union minister of commerce when he was assassinated in a bomb blast at Samastipur on 2 January 1975 From then on Mrs Gandhi used the example of Mishra s death to point out the continuing conspiracies to destroy her and her friends.

It was in the year 1957 Indira had become a member of the Central Social Welfare Board and apportioned responsibility for the hill areas from Jammu and Kashmir to Himachal and the Kulu valley She was on tour and decided to take a week's rest in a place called Shikargah, near Pahalgaum She was with her two sons Rajiv and Sanjay Yashpal Kapoor accompanied her It was a quiet, secluded beautiful day She was playing with the boys then only ten and twelve Kapoor was sitting on a large stone some distance away Clop clop, clop, he heard wooden sandals behind him He turned and saw a straight backed muslin clad swami with a long beard walking past into the beauteous surroundings Later he saw him following them on horseback My God thought Kapoor, he looks like Christ

The swami stopped him I d like to meet her, ' he said

No said Kapoor, she s not meeting anyone She's here for a rest

' What did he want? Indira asked Kapoor He told her

' Well, why not? she remarked What politics could he discuss?

So Kapoor fixed the appointment

It was Swami Dhirendra Brahmachari Suddenly from nowhere out of the mountains she loved He talked of matters far removed from the political whirl of Delhi familiar to her as her father the prime minister s official hostess He began teaching her sons simple exercises in yoga even in Shikargah In Delhi he became a frequent visitor at Teen Murti House and eventually gave yoga lessons to Pandit Nehru and Indira herself

Swami Dhirendra was also a friend of Jagjivan Ram[22] at the

[22] Jagjivan Ram born in 1908 in Arrah (Bihar) has held uninterrupted office in the government at the Centre since 1946 and as he told me once There s hardly a ministry I haven t had experience of! He has been the thorn in Mrs Gandhi s side despite his manifest support to her because the prestige and backing he commands in parliament and in the Harijan community could not be discounted He has a reputation for efficiency and extreme pol tical shrewd ness He left the Congress on 2 February 1977 lead ng a party revolt against Mrs Gandhi with n the Congress which led to the formation of the Congress for Democracy and its final merger with the Janata on 5 May 1977 He is now union minister of defence

Ram s swarthy body and dark glistening face combine with a cool calculated judgement that still keeps everyone guessing and certainly fooled Mrs Gandhi in her greatest crisis But it did not get h m the prime ministership he wanted

time but relations soon turned sour! He was allotted government accommodation at 1 Jantar Mantar Road When compelled to give that up he set up his yoga centre in a house in Defence Colony While attending an international conference in Delhi a Russian team of doctors visited the Defence Colony establishment and was vastly impressed with his work there The swami set up a trust for his yogashram, with—according to Yashpal Kapoor—JP, Jagjivan Ram, Naval Tata[23] and others as trustees and Morarji as patron In 1968 Morarji was deputy prime minister, also holding finance, but he refused to sanction an area of one and a half acres in the heart of New Delhi for the elaborate yogashram planned by the swami In 1969, Indira dismissed Morarji held finance herself for a year, and the swami got his land In the 1971 elections the grounds of the ashram were dotted with a convoy of jeeps and Sanjay Gandhi confiscated the camera of a press photographer whom he found trying to take pictures

Politics had become the peripheral edge of the swami s mystique So had his public image

Ousted because of the swami but back to his favourite ministry, Gujral remained chastened and uncertain He also began to be needled by an ex communist turned Congress combine of Kumaramangalam s men including Nandini Satpathy[24] who wanted control of such a vital area as communications He began clutching at straws for survival The swami appeared in regular half hour television shows teaching yoga But Mrs Gandhi once annoyed is as deceptive as a running stream—all ripple and flow on the surface but still and immune deep inside

Gujral was already in conflict with Mrs Gandhi s new inner conclave when 20 June 1975 brought him under that spell of special displeasure exercised by Sanjay Gandhi during the emergency and against which there was no court of appeal for a

[23]Naval Tata belongs to the business house of the Tatas

[24]Nandini Satpathy only forty seven is a dark petite woman with chiselled features a flashing smile and an energy for politics She was a member of the Communist Party of Ind a but joined the Congress in 1952 rose to become a favourite of Mrs Gandhi won the charge of deputy information and broadcasting minister and then a minister of state She became chief minister of Orissa in 1974 but finally lost the battle for Indira Gandhi s confidence and had to resign on 16 December 1976 She became founder member of the Congress for Democracy

number of people Sanjay had become the organizing spirit behind the rallies, the poster campaign and the massive propaganda initiative that hypnotized even the Congress leadership into raising a battle cry against the Allahabad high court judgement

Sanjay began where Gujral had left off in 1969 Ironically enough Gujral was at the receiving end of retribution in 1975 The day after the Boat Club rally[25] addressed by the prime minister in New Delhi—organized on a gigantic scale to prove her hold on the public—there was a belligerent phone call from Sanjay to Gujral, his mother s minister Why he asked shrilly was the rally not relayed directly on television? Gujral swallowed his pride and replied quietly that he would check up

The rule was that political party rallies were never relayed on television *though there had been exceptions since 1971 on the* direct orders of the then director general This time Gujral got the report, no request or demand had been made to the TV centre In any case all such decisions were taken at meetings in the ministry attended by the prime minister s adviser Sharada Prasad However, all the prime minister s speeches at the round about near her house where daily rallies were held throughout that fortnight began to be covered Mrs Gandhi was still annoyed She thought the camera angles of shots were taken to show her at a deliberate disadvantage, and no action was being taken on that

Having once flouted its own rule so openly, the media ministry found itself in a quandary The opposition were organizing their rally on 25 June and Jayaprakash Narayan[26] was to address it

[25]The Boat Club rally organized on the grounds facing Rashtrapati Bhavan had an estimated fifteen lakhs of people listening to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that day For the first time she was accompanied on the dias by her two sons Rajiv and Sanjay I have served my country since my childhood and I shall keep doing it till my last breath said Mrs Gandhi The real issue is whether the country will follow the socialistic policies that were launched four years ago She also said that forces both inside and outside the country were at work to liquidate her

[26]Age has not withered the rebellious spirit of seventy four years old Jayaprakash Narayan who came in from Marxist belief to join the Congress Party and raised a revolt to form the Congress Socialist Party with Ram Manohar Lohia Yusuf Meherally Minoo Masani Ashok Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan That was when he wanted Nehru who was thirteen years older to break

P C Chatterjee, the director general decided it should be covered The minister called a meeting which was attended by, among others, Professor P N Dhar, the prime minister s principal private secretary, and N K Mukerjee, the home secretary Gujral explained the problem then turned to Mukerjee, who said coolly "I think Professor Dhar can advise" Dhar thought for a minute ' This is a media problem The media should tackle it' "What should we do then?' Gujral asked the director general ' I think it should be covered he answered

He suggested they could take certain shots of JP addressing the meeting, and of the procession at various points, but avoid mis leading the viewers with exaggerated shots either way

This was only the beginning of Gujral s woes On 23 June the supreme court granted Mrs Gandhi the stay order, but with certain conditions She could function as prime minister till the supreme court s judgement, but she could not vote in parlia ment AIR s correspondent posted there rushed through with the news for immediate broadcast in English, which gave an optimis tic slant by saying 'Mrs Gandhi remains Prime Minister" For the Hindi news at 4 o'clock AIR took the Press Trust of India version which gave the conditions and conveyed a different impression This brought an angry demand from the PM s house. Sanjay wanted all news broadcast scripts to be shown to him first Another complaint reached the prime minister—it said that Gujral had no influence with foreign media at all and that BBC had broadcast a very damaging interpretation

The PM would like to see you, came a terse call from Dhawan to Gujral

Before going, Gujral checked up and found that a Pakistani news broadcast had been mistaken for the BBC one He rang Mrs Gandhi, explaining that nobody could be expected to use any influence that end She calmed down a bit But when Gujral reached her house, Sanjay came storming out of the anteroom

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away and strengthen the socialist movement Nehru refused and Narayan s own political fire dimmed after successive periods of disenchantment with the Westminsterial style of parliament with the role of state power and with even the welfare state The road to Gandhism for him was a tortuous one but that was the image with which he waged his one and only successful battle —the last one the movement of total revolution which contributed to the eventual downfall of Indira Gandhi s powerful regime

"You don t seem to know how to control your ministry,' he said loudly Can t you tell them how to put out the news even?

Gujral kept himself under control Look, I m equally upset and concerned But I don't have to give any explanation to you He brushed him aside politely and went in to see Mrs Gandhi

He clarified to the PM that it was not possible to forestall the pattern of late news announcements because the slips were sent in to the newsreader while news was being read At the time of the first broadcast there was a flash about the supreme court decision For the second broadcast in Hindi more details came in so more were read out In fact the news was rephrased and broadcast again at 4 30 pm Mrs Gandhi kept quiet

But the day the emergency was to be declared P N Bahl joint secretary in the PM s secretariat, walked into the news room of All India Radio at 6 am and took charge At 6 am Director General Chatterjee received a phone call from Gujral Get a team ready to record a message by the prime minister he instructed But don t send it till I tell you

Chatterjee contacted Station Director Barooah, and told him to rush to office

At 7 am Gujral rang again

"Send the team to the PM s house The message has to be broadcast in place of the news bulletin at 8

In place of the news bulletin?

It was then that Chatterjee realized something big was in the offing But he was in a quandary about whether or not to make an announcement beforehand of the PM s broadcast to the nation What if the team did not return in time for the 8 o clock bulletin he wondered He issued orders however that all services should take the broadcast and that all stations were to relay it simultaneously The Hindi team made it just two minutes to 8 followed by the English one It was in the nick of time But there was criticism of the fact that a prior announcement about the broadcast had not been made Sharada Prasad was in touch with the DG but he did not tell him He told the news room so the DG used his own discretion

But the ministry was Gujral s and Gujral was found too soft in his handling of the media particularly of the press and very particularly on the night of the emergency The decision to cut off electricity to all presses so that there could be no news of the

pre dawn arrests of national leaders was not implemented effectively enough even in Delhi itself Delhi s Fleet Street (Baha dur Shah Zafar Marg) housing the *Indian Express*, the *Times of India*, the *Patriot*, and the *National Herald* was blacked out, but the *Statesman* and the *Hindustan Times* got away with morning supplements giving details of the arrests, while the Jan Sangh's *Motherland* which logically, should have been the first target, brought out a full issue printed at their press in Jhandewalan, an area not covered by electricity failure

On 26 June there were a group of friends sitting at Gujral's house in the evening when the call came from the PM s house to come over Gujral lost colour At 9 30 pm he was relieved of his charge

' Anytime now, ' he thought early the next morning they ll come for me like Chandra Shekhar

He knew Indira Gandhi had become suspicious of his loyalty One of the reasons was that he was supposed to have visited Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Babu Jagjivan Ram much too often and too quietly between the vital fortnight of 12 25 June This was a time when the question of finding a substitute leader was being discussed in the possible event of Mrs Gandhi temporarily stepping down to await the supreme court judgement Ram was being mentioned around as the obvious choice Her measure of loyalty had become an exacting one then Even if I met him, argued Gujral, 'what does it mean? He was a member of her own cabinet, her own minister '

Earlier, she had resented his meeting Dinesh Singh even socially but this was more crucial For her colleagues it created an artificiality in political demeanour which soured personal relationships I don t know what her thinking was that she never retained regard for old connections exclaimed Dinesh Singh, as perplexed as the rest of the then Congress leadership over this prime ministerial trait ' She had not kept up any personal relations in politics but I have Panditji never got on with JP but he maintained the connection Ours is a soft society It is never easy to engineer a clash

What Indira Gandhi did was to encourage a code of loyalty with such rigid ramifications that like everything else, these became accentuated during the emergency Loyalty to the Congress was not enough, it had to be loyalty expressed in terms

of unequivocal personal allegiance to her Once a mistrust arose in her mind about any of her colleagues even the ordinary acceptance of a dinner invitation where Jagjivan Ram was to be chief guest for instance, was interpreted as a sign of disloyalty Gujral had survived the emergency crisis as well but only because President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed[27] pleaded with her on his behalf Two days after the declaration of the emergency on 28 June at 9 30 am he was asked to take charge as minister of state for planning He was virtually pushed into the backwaters He did not resign nor did she relent In March 1976 he was appointed India s ambassador to Moscow bruited as the top post in the diplomatic galaxy but an effective enough instrument as far as she was concerned to remove him from politics

The most controversial intra play within the Congress Party which symbolized the issues devouring the vitals of the organiza tion was the Indira Bahuguna[28] Kapoor Sanjay syndrome Not a single Congressman belonging to either the pro Indira or anti Indira group within the party fails to mention the case of Bahuguna as an example of her relentless pressure against anyone promising talented and with a future even if the person proclaimed unimpeachable loyalty Gujral had said on repeated occasions that the thing which hurt him most was her doubts about his allegiance and that any other accusation but *this could have made sense*

It has been Mrs Gandhi s contention that those she supported and nurtured invariably let her down Her natural inclination was to pick the intelligent and the ebullient Her equally natural fear of being overshadowed made her start distrusting them

May be she was not far wrong commented Chandra Shekhar

[27]Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was president of India from August 1974 to February 1977 He died in office of a heart attack A firm supporter of Indira Gandhi during the 1969 split and a member of her government thereafter he was elected to this exalted position in 1971 He signed more ordinances than any other president to date Educated at Cambridge he retained an old world charm He was fond of music and the arts and with Begum Abida his vivacious wife made Rashtrapati Bhavan play host to a variety of interesting people.

[28]Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna was born in Bugani in UP on 25 April 1917 He is seven months older than Indira Gandhi He became chief minister of UP on 9 November 1973 and resigned on 30 November 1975

on the subject Look at the way they have all discarded her now—particularly her most vociferous companions of the Left! If anyone were to mete out punishment, it is they who should be jailed first

Chandra Shekhar obviously referred to Barooah,[29] Ray,[30] and Chandrajit Yadav but Mrs Gandhi had made as much use of them as they had of her The Bahuguna episode repeated a set pattern He was flamboyant, but an organizational genius who functioned on her behalf as general secretary of the Congress in 1969 and earned his reward by being appointed union minister of state for communications Later, he was installed in UP as chief minister by the Centre with the implicit stipulation that Delhi would weild all the final sanctions

Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna was a clever man Clever enough to fall in and clever enough to bide his time From pre-independence politics as a student leader in Allahabad University (jailed in 1942), he had grown into a strong dynamic personality with a flair for being on the winning side Indira s was the winning side, but the vast expanse of UP politics was an irresistible territory to conquer Bahuguna did not think the two need necessarily clash But if he allowed Mrs Gandhi her ascendance, she was not prepared to allow him his ambition She felt much the same about him as Kamaraj[31] had felt about her after he helped

[29]Sixty three years old Dev Kanta Barooah a friend of Feroze Gandhi and a socialist minded Congressman from Assam, has a mind that flits from topic to topic with a kind of truant intellectuality Any attempt to discuss a party problem say Congress colleagues had to await an eclectic wandering over a dozen unrelated subjects first! Barooah was union minister for petroleum and chemicals in 1971 73 On 19 October 1974 he was elected Congress president and had to preside over the dissolution of an empire before his very eyes, when the Congress was routed in March 1977 He managed to retain his own seat in parliament however

[30]Born in 1920 Siddhartha Shankar Ray became chief minister of West Bengal in 1971 He was a staunch supporter of Indira Gandhi right through the emergency but was grouped with the Left bloc within the Congress which she came to strongly suspect as wanting to oust her His outspoken criticism of her leadership after the Congress debacle had some people suspect him of political opportunism

[31]Kamaraj Nadar was called *the* iron man of the Congress. He was chief minister of Tamil Nadu but made his impact on national pol tics as Congress president In 1966 he played a major role in marshalling opinion in favour of Ind ra Gandhi s candidature for prime minister as against Morarji A rough but *simple man*, Kamaraj evolved a style of common sense politics.

make her prime minister—that pliability has changing shapes

In 1969, when Babu Jagjivan Ram became Congress president, Bahuguna was general secretary After the split in the Congress, Mrs Gandhi wanted him to go back to UP Bahuguna pre empted her decision, and inveigled the announcement from Jagjivan Ram that he would retain Bahuguna in the same capa city in the central organization ' Look at him, exclaimed a ruffled Indira he s gone and had it announced from there She was again irritated when she found that in the 1971 Lok Sabha elections Bahuguna had been paying twenty parliamentary candidates more than the amount stipulated by the All India Congress Committee, this was presumably in order to make them 'his men ' After the elections on a trip to Rae Bareli Bahuguna managed to get a seat on the same plane as the PM When she suggested that he should become union minister of state for communications he refused You can do something first ' she urged The promotion will come later He wouldn t agree

When she communicated this to Uma Shankar Dixit[32] and others at Rae Bareli it was Kapoor s comment that planted the first seed of distrust He has defied you he said

For one month Bahuguna cooled his heels

Mrs Gandhi was then told that Bahuguna had made Raj Narain[33] file the now famous election petition against her It was possible that his association was only to emulate C B Gupta who

He talked little but even his silence had a sting He was a great admirer of Jawaharlal Nehru but sentiment was not the only reason for the support he gave Indira Gandhi He thought that as prime minister she would be amenable to persuasion and to his influence It came as a shock to him that she was not prepared for that He died on 2 October 1975

[32]Uma Shankar Dixit now seventy six was an old time minor associate of the Nehrus and was brought into politics at a national level by Indira Gandhi as part of her strategy to surround herself with loyal yes men The acme of his career was his appointment as union home minister in 1973 75 Once he started feeling that he really was a man of some consequence she packed him off to the shipping and transport ministry and then on to gubernatorial insignificance as governor of Karnataka A lumbering old man he depended on his daughter in law to act as confidant in his years of power in Delhi

[33]Raj Narain sixty years old idiosyncratic socialist who has finally made it to the top He was never taken very seriously till he became the "giant killer by winning his petition against Indira Gandhi and being indirectly responsible for the events that changed the very fabric of Indian political life He was president of the All India Socialist Party and is now union

had, as CM, always [illegible] to [illegible] the Socialist Party in UP as
a pocket party. In fact, Bahuguna had made a frantic call from
Lucknow to Delhi the morning the petition was filed.
N K. Seshan, an [illegible] close aide, had been contacted Kapoor
Bahuguna just rang the PM. He's [illegible] Raj Narain
had filed the petition and wants to know whether we have got a
lawyer on our behalf."
Till the court sends a summons, we can't do anything" said
Kapoor, and added, "Seshan, he's not rang up about the election
petition. He wants [illegible] for himself."
The PM laughed when Seshan told her of Kapoor's reaction.
It was decided to get Bahuguna to Delhi.
'*Gurudev*' rang out Kapoor's [illegible]
morning to Bahuguna, "[illegible] [illegible] 300 miles that
Bahuguna arrived the next day. It was a Sunday. That was the
day Indira Gandhi tried [illegible]
way in which the pattern [illegible] But the insidious
in this case only a p [illegible] got involved was
of the emergency [illegible] under conditions
Bahuguna rang the PM's house. The PA on duty informed
Kapoor. Kapoor instructed [illegible] Bahuguna keep ringing
Every half hour Bahuguna [illegible] was 7 30 in the eve-
ring and he finally lost his temper [illegible] The PM has called me here!
he shouted. She'll think I [illegible] if you don't tell her
Kapoor had the PA put [illegible] to him. 'Who rang
you up?' asked Kapoor.
Bahuguna was thoroughly [illegible] "You did."
Why didn't you ring [illegible]
Kapoor then informed the PM, [illegible]
first see Uma Shankar Dikshit [illegible] [illegible] that Bahuguna should
Go and meet Bhishmapitamah[illegible] relayed Kapoor to

minister of health and family planning [illegible]
zest while his favourite recreation [illegible] government. He eats with
own sturdy physique. He has a [illegible] seem to go ill with his
less to stimulate thought and more to [illegible] ideas in a way which does
to him!" people exclaimed at the [illegible] How could she lose
lose to him. Indira Gandhi lost to [illegible] Gandhi's defeat. She did not
[34]Bhishmapitamah, the sage [illegible] of both the Kauravas and the
Pandavas in *Mahabharata* the Hindu epic. He was on the side of the Kauravas
in the battle between the two but was known as a strong man whose will
could not be flouted.

Bahuguna using the common mythological reference for Dixit Humour was evidently not at a discount even in the power game

When finally Bahuguna got to m et Mrs Gandhi she offered him the position of minister of state for communications This time Bahuguna accepted

By the end of 1973 Kamlapati Tripathi[25] was at a low ebb as chief minister in UP There were allegations against his son, and general discontent President s rule was imposed Flections had to be held There were continuous meetings at the PM s house Several suggestions were made, but Kapoor s were the operative ones

If you keep Tripathiji we can t win said he to the PM

Who then! she asked

' Make Bahuguna the chief minister '

You know what he s like, she remarked

I know he s a *tikrami* (trickster) admitted Kapoor

You never know what he ll do afterwards she rejoined

He ll be in your hands said Kapoor You can do what you like

Bahuguna now says that by then Sanjay had begun to make his presence felt in the ministerial sphere, implying that one of the reasons for his ouster from Delhi was Sanjay s unhappiness with him He recalled having issued a blanket order in his ministry for the transfer of all those who had been in Delhi for over ten years This hit one of Sanjay s engineer friends whom the prime minister s son wished should remain in Delhi Bahuguna said he couldn t make such an obvious exception and the man had to go As soon as I left the ministry the man was back says Bahuguna I never wanted to go to UP even as chief minister '

He had in fact been offered the deputy chief ministership

[25]Kamlapati Tripathi looks like the *pandit* he is with a large *tilak* mark on his forehead and all the instincts of the Brahmin This fetches him an obeisance which is almost extra political But nobody could be more shrewd than this old time boss of UP—nobody that is other than Indira Gandhi who had even him playing to her tune He was chief m nister of UP from 1971 to 1973 and was union minister of transport and shipping in 1973 His position as a senior Congressman was rehabilitated only when Jagjivan Ram left and Indira Gandhi had to fall back on old trusted colleagues

but refused When he was persuaded to accept, Kamlapati Tripathi refused to have him The way the situation developed suggests more of an accidental progression of events than calculated moves on Mrs Gandhi's part to ensure central control as part of a preconceived plan But the criterion was definitely subservience to her will The UP Legislature Party was nowhere in the picture All the moves as to who should be chief minister were worked out amongst a close coterie in the capital. Those selected in Delhi were expected to get a routine sanction from a willing concourse of the state s MLAs Procedurally all the right motions would be gone through but substantively, decision making had been usurped by the Centre

It was decided that Narain Dutt Tiwari[36] who was then chief whip in the UP Legislature Party would carry a note to the UP governor demanding restoration of the elected government Tripathi was to become chief minister again and he was to decide the composition of his ministry with Uma Shankar Dixit and Shankar Dayal Sharma[37] the next morning But Kapoor planted a little seed in the prime minister s mind again that night, which changed the situation radically She need not have listened to him, but that she was vulnerable to his suggestions shows where her own suspicions lay He wrote her a little note ' Tripathiji will become CM He s not agreeing to your suggestions even now What will he do later?

The prime minister told Tiwari not to deliver the letter to the governor till further instructions The next day she flew off to Kerala Tiwari rang Tripathi from Lucknow informing him of

[36]Narain Dutt Tiwari now fifty-one years old became chief minister of UP during the emergency and earned himself the dubious status of one who acted according to Sanjay's instructions He has a faultless academic record however a first class first in law (previous) a first class first in MA (previous) in diplomacy and a first class first *in law (final) He was in the Congress movement in 1942* but left to join the Congress Socialist Party in 1948 He was elected to the UP Legislative Assembly in 1957 on the Praja Socialist Party ticket and became leader of the opposition He rejoined the Congress and was finance minister in Bahuguna s ministry before becoming chief minister himself

[37]Shankar Dayal Sharma fifty nine is a bar-at law from Lincoln s Inn He was general secretary of the Congress in 1968-72 keeping his post during the 1969 battle with a last minute switch to Indira Gandhi s side He became Congress president in 1972 A clever intelligent man and a good conversationalist he did nothing to shift the presidentship from its position of playing second fiddle to the prime minister

the latest position The same morning Shankar Dayal and Dixit enquired from Tripathi when they should come over Tripathi was gruff "No ministry,' he said. I'm going to Benares If she needs me, she can call me

They rang the PM in Kerala ' If he s angry he s angry what can I do from here! she said and banged the telephone down

Bahuguna became chief minister

Immediately, with the 1974 assembly elections themselves, he earned the allegation that he had got those candidates defeated "whose loyalty was supposed to be direct to Delhi A strange concept what did it mean this loyalty to Delhi?

' To Indira Gandhi herself affirmed a loyal Congressman You know the kind of people who said we re in the Congress only because of Indiraji

What about loyalty to the party? I asked him

"Well that yes of course, but there s a personal attachment a leader you prefer It s part of politics this groupism You have to accept it Why did you have a C B Gupta group for that matter, why a Tripathi group?

Why indeed? Why have those who were Nehru s fans and those who were Patel s[28] right within the Congress? But that was a period when the Congress Party needed an internal polarization of ideas and ideologies so the crosscurrents were inevitable After 1969 when Indira Gandhi made an issue out of Left orientation and got herself such fervent support the party could have been cohered together on a programmatic basis Admittedly, the Bangladesh war and its repercussions[29] took two years away The months of 1973 were the real test phase however But even in 1974, the game of manipulative politics

[28]Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was the only other man in Nehru s cabinet around whom a rival faction could have grown He reconciled himself however to the fact that he could never match Nehru s popularity with the masses If Nehru functioned in the context of international trends the Sardar s sights were fixed nearer home He was a strong practical down to-earth home minister Impatient with idealistic talk he effected the smooth integration of princely states into the union of India

[29]The problem of feeding ten million refugees looking after the 90 000 soldiers of the Pakistan army who had been captured and its effect on the economy led to an anticipated increase in prices Mrs Gandhi kept warning people at the height of the euphoria created by India s singular victory that 'we will have to pay the price.

had begun with a sharper edge to involvement and the growing tension which led to such tragic consequences for party functioning later

Bahuguna in UP was both victim and participant, like the rest of the Congress leadership 'Delhi' was expecting to win around 280 seats in the assembly Bahuguna was attributed to have deliberately aimed at only 216 for the Congress so that the party remained weak and Bahuguna himself in power Attempts to dislodge him thereafter would result in a revolt by his faction and the fall of the Congress ministry For Delhi" to feel this and for Bahuguna to even think of executing such a plan were a symptom of the future that lay in store for the party only two years later

A touch of ideology did indeed come with the confrontation over the Birla issue in 1974 'Delhi' wanted to support K K Birla s[48] candidature (for the Rajya Sabha from UP) as an independent against Raj Narain who had lost in 1972 to another industrialist V R Mohan First they had suggested a person called Prakash Mehrotra and Bahuguna had reacted very strongly ' What the sugar lobby? I don t want him He was ill in hospital when he sent a message to the PM about their second choice

K K Birla won t win '

What s the harm in trying? said Kapoor who played a dominant role in the affair

He went to Lucknow with prime ministerial sanction and got enough opposition MLAs on his side to ensure Birla s win by secret ballot But Bahuguna returned in time to station his whips and the voting had to be open When he himself went to vote he hugged Raj Narain for everyone to see and exclaimed You of course are our friend! Birla lost and Bahuguna made a speech in the assembly the next day saying that capitalists had no place in his scheme of things This came into confrontation with a trend symbolized by Sanjay which was crystallizing into an anti socialist pro-free enterprise and multinationals one. Not only had Bahuguna shown his predilection for the leftist bloc he had proved his own strength against that of Delhi This presaged his final downfall and perhaps the first step towards

[48]Krishna Kumar Birla belonged to the big business house of the Birlas.

the eventual birth of the Congress for Democracy

She did not like my getting established there charges Bahuguna Governor Akbar Ali was replaced because we got on well together B N Kureel[41] was made PCC (Pradesh Congress Committee) president but he too was shifted because he wouldn t quarrel with me Then Lakshmi Shankar Yadav[42] was sent as president of the PCC, election was replaced by nomination Then Mohsina Kidwai[43] Alright but why could she not be elected? Indiraji s use of we was gradually replaced by I' '

'There was a grievance against you that you worked against the official candidates I told Bahuguna

Why did she not establish an enquiry committee? It was very strange As we say *ajeeb raaz hai na gawah hai na daleel hai, na vakil hai* (a strange case this there is no witness no argument and no defence)

Eventually even tantric ritual was brought into the power game Swami Poornanand used to be a *pujari* (priest) in a temple at Allahabad He and two of his brothers practice tantra, while the fourth concentrates on ayurvedic medicine

When Swami Poornanand shifted to Satna in Madhya Pradesh, Bahuguna who had known him in Allahabad was a frequent visitor there We kept hearing of his visits but we didn t think anything of them says Kapoor They were private visits and even the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh wasn t informed It was only later that all sorts of rumours began to reach us that he was trying to have tantric *pujas* done to bring Mrs Gandhi down so that he could be prime minister It is an unbelievable facet of political goings on but Kapoor said that he sent his own man, a Chandra Swami to win the confidence of Poornanand to find out the truth That is how they learnt that Poornanand s younger brother was conducting a mystical ceremony near a famous temple in Maihar Bahuguna, his son Vijay and a friend, Ram Adhar Pandey had taken a *sankalp* (vow), and the responsibility for being the medium to communicate ill luck to Mrs Gandhi Sanjay, and R K Dhawan respectively

Bahuguna refutes all this with contempt The only swami I went to was a family friend who had treated me for a heart

[41]Congress leader from UP
[42]*Ibid*
[43]*Ibid*

ailment in 1965 I wrote to Indiraji about the Satna affair but there was no response of course '

This was like a pale prelude to the suspicion brewing in the PM's house that Bahuguna along with Justice Sinha[44] was involved in a conspiracy against Mrs Gandhi At a party in Satna in the first week of the vital month of June 1975, Bahuguna is reported to have exclaimed, '*Are*, she s going for six years now Kapoor charges me for finishing Indiraji through the judge—I ll finish Kapoor'

Then on 12 June 1975, came the judgement

Nothing that Bahuguna said or did had any effect on Mrs Gandhi after that Her prejudice was like a wall against which he beat his head repeatedly, and in vain Sanjay confided to a colleague in August the same year that Bahuguna would soon be out and UP politics would be more manageable Sanjay was beginning to mouth his mother s opinions quite strongly by then

Har Charan Singh Josh, then general secretary of the Youth Congress, went on a tour of western UP on 5 August He came back and reported to Sanjay that the people were talking against the emergency, and against Mrs Gandhi Sanjay remarked that it was Bahuguna who was betraying them He told Josh to discuss UP affairs with Kapoor

Josh tried to persuade Bahuguna to meet Sanjay I have worked with Panditji and Indiraji I can t go to a little boy who is like my son replied Bahuguna But Josh managed to take him to the Maruti premises They rang the factory and found Sanjay who came to the telephone As soon as Bahuguna said, Sanjayji, I wanted to meet ' the line got disconnected

I don t know whether it was deliberate or not ' recalls Josh 'I kept trying for half an hour to get through but they kept saying that Sanjay had gone inside the factory and no telephone could reach him

Early the 27th morning of November Bahuguna did meet Sanjay at Maruti He came away looking deathly pale Later he walked with forced exuberance to the house of Mohammad

[44]Jag Mohan Lal Sinha was born on 19 May 1920 in Aligarh. He practised law in Bareli was appointed district government counsel and then joined the judicial services as a civil and sessions judge.

He was appointed permanent judge of the Allahabad high court on 25 August 1972 and will retire in 1982 He is grey grim, and gritty

Yunus[45] carrying a large bouquet of flowers to congratulate him on his appointment as the PM s special envoy But he also carried with him a plea— Can t you do something Yunus *Bhai*? Yunus expre ed his helplessness murmuring later to a friend who was present I like Bahuguna But he s on his way out what can I do? He should not have encouraged Kapoor so much

The same evening Bahuguna was told to submit his resignation

His public face remained impeccable The High Command which sent me to UP is competent to call me back I have no complaints he said

But instructions had immediately been issued to the censor— All stories on Bahuguna filed from Lucknow to be pre censored Only factual information to be allowed The black out was intended to be total We ll see what they do when the time for elections comes said Bahuguna angrily to a friend Then I ll show them

Between 29 November 1975 and 18 January 1977 when Mrs Gandhi announced the elections Bahuguna says he wrote her seven letters which sought to clear misunderstandings there might be in her mind He did not get a single reply He asked for an interview thirty eight times On 18 January he sent her a tele gram offering his help and cooperation during the elections No reply Whenever he did get to meet her with an explanation she would say that others were giving her a contrary version On Bahuguna s part it was perhaps the last desperate attempt to

[4] Mohammad Yunus is an unusual combination of a man whose youth was spent n pol t cs and whose induction into the Indian foreign service took h m as ambassadc to various countries Now sixty-one he was born in Abbotabad in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan was secretary to Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan (whose daughter is marr ed to the elder brother of Mohammad Yunus) and an ardent f ery protagonist of the Khudai Kh dmatgar move ment aga nst the British

Yunus stayed v th Jawaharlal Nehru from 1938 to 1941 and became friend follower and admirer the association lasted through the gen rat o is along th I eroze Ind ra Gandh s husband Yunus was jailed for four years in the Quit Ind a movement and h s book on Pathan hi tory was banned An expert on Arab aff irs he i blunt but sharp and his rap d gunfire style of talk hides an almost sentimental concern for personal and pol t cal commitment He became Mrs Gandhi s special envoy on 6 October 1975 was the man beh nd Samachar and became chairman of the coord nat on committee of the Press Agencies Pool of the non aligned countr es

stay in the organization he had been brought up in, and to seek an equation with the charisma that Mrs Gandhi still had about her Like the gasping of a man about to drown in the organization, or the obstinacy of a politician who would never give up And after all, they were all beginning to feel that the organization could not be left to her as her personal fief Bahuguna even went to the extent of standing in line with his wife Kamala at the airport in Allahabad, when Mrs Gandhi visited the Kumbh Mela on 14 January When she did see them, however, she just turned her face away

In Delhi, R K Dhawan, who was acquiring a reputation as one of the kingpins of the emergency, sought hard to make amends I know the PM doesn t want to meet her," he told Kamala Bahuguna's private secretary who had rung to ask for an appointment "but ask her to come I ll take her to the PM " Dhawan s contention is that contrary to the stories that were spread about the impregnability of the High Command, he was at pains to provide opportunities for people who wanted to meet the prime minister

The system worked somewhat like this The appointments were fixed by N K. Seshan the soft spoken, quiet but firm senior counterpart of Dhawan whom Mrs Gandhi had inherited from the Nehru days By 8 am Seshan would arrive at 1 Safdarjang Road, and leave by 9 am for the PM s office He would return in the evenings The appointments would be fixed by him on the basis of lists of requests coming in throughout the day, to be shown to Mrs Gandhi in the evenings She would then tick off the names of those she wanted to meet Officials normally went through P N Dhar the prime minister s principal private secretary, an officer of the rank of secretary to the government of India But the procedure was the same The names would be sent via Seshan for an official appointment Dhawan s purvi w was the PM s house where, he says chief ministers and ministers used to drop in without even ringing beforehand

When the PM went on her travels I never accompanied her When she went to parliament the MPs used to meet her there I never went to Parliament House I never had a table there Where was the question of my stopping the chief ministers from meeting her? In fact I was asked by some of them to tell Seshan to get them an interview I was accus d by other officers in the

secretariat that I let too many people meet her every Tom Dick and Harry they said The press was completely barred They never let a pressman come here It was in the morning sessions that I had the discrimination to let anyone come and meet her

There was an instance soon after the defeat when a man went up to Mrs Gandhi on the lawns at 1 Safdarjang Road, where she continued to meet people He berated his misfortune in not having been able to get past Dhawan in order to warn her of the wrongs being done during the emergency Dhawan happened to be standing just behind her but the man did not even recognize him He had apparently learnt of Dhawan from the latter s reply to his letter to the PM

So much for being a stumbling block! exclaimed Dhawan while relating the incident I had a job here with the sword of Damocles over my head

There was however an extracurricular authority which they all weilded regardless of stipulated procedures because of the very nature of their position They could get an appointment with the PM for somebody they wanted to favour somebody with whom they were on specially good terms, or somebody who was persistent enough—like Bahuguna or his wife But the impact was only marginal in the course of events They had to take the cue from the attitude of the prime minister herself They were in a position to know whom she wanted to meet and who had to be put on the shelf! So accordingly they were warm cold receptive or cooperative I doubt if one can pick out a single instance when members of her personal or official staff friends or colleagues were able to change Mrs Gandhi s mind about how she felt about a particular person or politician once the link had been broken, as far as she was concerned What really happened was that once the close group around her realized that a certain person was in disfavour each tried to augment that distrust or make an attempt to remove it according to their personal equation with the person The import of the second line of machinations remained peri pheral because Mrs Gandhi held the weight for tilting the balance the side she wanted

There was a certain amount of goodwill for Gujral at some stage in the PM s house viewed in terms of being the emotional barometer of the Indian political scene But that did not help

him in any way, except in being able to find out the extent of her hostility, or the colour of her mood Where her distrust or anger towards a person was expressed *in too consistent* or *too* manifest a manner, fringe influences were themselves frightened of voicing the mildest dissent In fact, so as not to invite her wrath or her suspicions about their own bona fides, they would provide *interpretations* —*sometimes* deliberately fashioned—to affirm how right she had been in her assessments

Had Mrs Gandhi not revealed her changed attitude to P N *Haksar,*[46] *in such unequivocal terms, it would not have been* possible for one of her close confidants to take him by the scruff of his neck and warn him "not to make insinuations against Sanjay, Maruti, or any one of the family ever again!'

The apparent charge against Haksar, however, had been that he was strengthening his bureaucratic powers, taking even the ministers for granted and making the prime minister's secretariat the hub of political and administrative decision making The fall from favour came later, when he entered into conflict with the PM over Sanjay and Maruti. He had *thought himself* close enough to the PM to be able to advise her that Sanjay would have to be kept in check and Maruti wound up Haksar had obviously not realized that this was like touching a hot iron He was singed badly I was told at that time that Haksar *opposed* Maruti *because his own land fell into the* area which was taken over by Bansi Lal as factory premises

Haksar, thus lost his job

'Anybody who disagreed was quietly put on the shelf," observes a Congressman who still retains his regard for Haksar as an honest, clear headed, and loyal person[47] What is surprising is a

[46]The career of sixty four years old Parmeshwar Narain Haksar a barrister at law was not as distinguished by his work in the foreign service as by his personal achievements—a sober calculated *intellectuality that worked in areas* of radical thought. He was lifted into the top position as the PM's principal private secretary in 1967 and strongly influenced trends until 1971 when he left because of differences with the prime minister He was brought back to power as deputy chairman of the planning commission on 3 January 1975 Relations with Mrs Gandhi however remained cool.

[47]Sita Ram Kesri is a fifty-eight years old Congressman from Bihar with twinkling eyes and a rakish look. But he's one of the solid ones essentially an organization person who exudes the typical air of a professional politician. He has been a member of the Bihar PCC since 1934 he became observer AICC in

comment in typical homespun language from Sita Ram Kesri, the organization chief in Bihar who played a crucial role in giving Sanjay his first political boost. "I m very much opposed to Haksar, but he has a number one brain He has intellectual calibre Being a leftist he could still point the rightist way if needed I am not sure if Haksar would take that as a compliment But he remained one of those figures—pointed out as an example by Congressmen—who illustrated Indira Gandhi's capacity to juggle with men of opinion, and not relent.

I had something to do with softening her attitude on Haksar, says V P Sathe[48] member of the Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra and a vocal protagonist of the Congress Left ' But she would say, Well he is angry, he must be angry with me' Haksar would say, 'She doesn't trust me what s the use' She did bring him back eventually but once that rapport was broken it was broken " The impact of mediation efforts to bring back the personal equation was again marginal

By 1974 the issues at stake were larger, there was a perceptible tension between socialist thought and capitalist in ent Though personal style had something to do with the way her colleagues fell, the choice of those who had to go was becoming part of a grand pattern

Like the extra constitutional centre of authority the new caucus too had a pedigree It was not a bastard creation of instant ambition and the emergency It had established antecedents—the Ginger Group, the Syndicate, the Mishra Combine the Kitchen Cabinet, the Young Turks, Haksar's Men, and the Communists in Congress conclave The difference is that some of these like the Ginger Group or the Young Turks were ideological pressure groups, while the others were power

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1964-67 member of the Lok Sabha during 1967 70 and of the Rajya Sabha from 1971 onwards His bulk prevents one from associating him with any revolutionary activity but he was imprisoned in connection with the Ranchi conspiracy case in 1931 33 and three times more during the Congress movement!

[48]Vasantrao Purushottam Sathe fifty two tall grey eyed good looking member of the Rajya Sabha of Maharashtra is an eloquent protagonist of economic reform His assessment springs from a philosophical rather than political analysis of the character of the men and women involved in events of significance He was a member of the Congress parliamentary party executive and of the Swaran Singh committee on constitutional amendments

oriented After the emergency the system itself provided such impetus that the operations of the new caucus, geared towards manipulating power, acquired dimensions far greater than those exercised by its original path setters The emergency was like those mirrors you have at fun fairs in which you see your image bloated to grotesque sizes or cut to dwarfish insignificance, expanded horizontally or twisted into shapes that make you laugh your guts out Every institution and personality, functioning normally in normal times, acquired an abnormality But the situation wasn t funny at all, it had people crying their hearts out It was like seeing the Mr Hyde for Dr Jekyll, but the sense of righteousness in Mrs Gandhi was so strong that not once did the mask slip off her face

Even during the emergency, however, Indira could not touch Chavan and Jagjivan Ram the iron men in her cabinet When she did, it was she who got singed for it was Jagjivan Ram's revolt that brought her tumbling down. The politicians she created —Dinesh Singh, Gujral, Bahuguna, and others —were those she had managed to throw out at will The others whose support was unassailable, she tried to neutralize in cleverer ways Her biggest gamble, the most finely calculated one, was over the Syndicate, she risked a split in the party while the presidential election over Giri became almost like a referendum, and she could throw out such stalwarts as Morarji Desai Kamaraj, S Nijalingappa Atulya Ghosh, and S K. Patil The battle within the group supporting her was of another kind At a time when her power was supreme and she could afford it she denuded even Chavan of his potential for rivalry She took away the intelligence agencies from the home ministry, and revenue intelligence and banking from finance As Bahuguna said soon after she announced the elections and Jagjivan Ram left the Congress, 'What remains of the finance ministry except the finance minister? It is Babuji s (Jagjivan Ram s) action now which has provided some engagement to Brahmananda Reddy [11] She has

[11] Kasu Brahmananda Reddy, sixty-eight, chief minister of Andhra Pradesh during 1964 71 with a record of jail during the Quit India movement, and an interest in sports came to the Centre with a reputation for firmness and efficiency He was appointed union minister for communications in January 1974 and given the prestigious ministry of home affairs in October 1975 He is short dark, and looks reserved But when he talks he ranges with deceptive

surrounded herself with pygmies and nobody can do a giant's job "

"Indiraji was surrounded by mediocre advisers" admitted Kesri, the staunch loyalist, who otherwise affirms that nothing would make him leave Indiraji in this difficulty Even the chief ministers were third rate people '

"Maybe she prefers third rate people to be able to control them better?" I asked

"But do they remain under control? A strong man is an asset not a weakness A man of character who knows his party—he'll stand by you not the weak ones '

Indira Gandhi thought Chavan had let her down in 1969 by not giving her spontaneous support at Bangalore over the Giri issue She tried hard, thereafter, to cut him off from his base in Maharashtra, which was the source of his strength But Jagjivan Ram?

"Don't speak till I know who s going to win ' D P Mishra advised him in 1966 in the battle for leadership between her and Morarji Desai But as soon as she won and the cabinet was being formed there came a wail from Jagjivan Ram

Ustad! ' he cried out, using his favourite term for Mishra, ' I am being humiliated She s giving me labour and the rank is low

' *Guru* consoled Mishra, using the appelation he habitually used for Ram ' now the circumstances are changed Let it be

Have I sunk so low in your eyes as well? Jagjivan Ram was so upset that Mishra rang Mrs Gandhi and induced her to change the ministry and discard the system of ranking in favour of the alphabetical order

"Their differences came when Jagjivan Ram became Congress president and wanted to retain both offices,' said Mishra That was the beginning of her distrust

The Congress Party at the Centre was united emotionally under Pandit Nehru" said Tarkeshwari Sinha a young attractive, deputy finance minister in Nehru s cabinet who was Mrs Gandhi s most vociferous opponent within the party for a number of years ' But in the states there were strong group

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expansiveness over party affairs without committing himself too solidly to anything *He has not recovered from the shock I think* of his anonymous existence during the emergency

affiliations The question of Morarji replacing Nehru never arose and there was a consensus on Shastri By the time Mrs Gandhi came we had become loyal supporters of Morarji When he lost we stuck to him I don't mind admitting publicly that we brought groupism into the Centre But Mrs Gandhi was very amiable I was such a vocal opponent of hers but she never interfered in the elections of the Congress parliamentary party—the very fact that I got such an overwhelming majority showed that she didn't interfere But in September, the power play to oust her began She got information that at the Congress parliamentary board meeting they were going to pass a resolution asking for a vote of confidence, but Kamaraj didn't turn up in the end She became scared from then on That's when she started operating the levers of power and sought control of the party machinery as well"

In 1969 Jagjivan Ram stood strongly on Indira's side when the rest of the Congress leadership joined together to form the Syndicate and forced a party split. He was her defence minister during the war over Bangladesh, sharing perhaps some of her finest hours But the collaboration remained an unsettled one In fact, it was anticipated that she would use the power of her great electoral victory in 1971 to finally drop Jagjivan Ram from the cabinet But she was too astute and too wary Jagjivan Ram had an estimated support of eighty members of parliament, if he chose to withdraw his backing, it would leave her massive majority depleted—from 361 in a house of 524, to a mere 281 She stuck on to him, but steadily began undercutting his influence in Bihar—propping alternate leaders who could command support amongst the Harijans—and gradually brought about a situation where almost every known friend or supporter of Jagjivan Ram knew that he could get a ticket an office, or sinecure only at the cost of a *volte face* in her favour

Jagjivan Ram tried but could not match Mrs Gandhi s consummate manipulative skills It was not as if he sat quietly waiting for the axe to fall But as he says "I am not a moralist, I am a politician and (had) to keep my silence'

But the judgement of 12 June 1975 brought the issue out into the open. He probably thought he could beat her at her own game Jagjivan Ram certainly did not sit in silence that day at 1 Safdarjang Road where the entire Congress leadership had

converged betraying varying moods of fear doubt, trepidation, or confident fervour He kept reiterating all through for every one to hear, "She s the leader, judgement or no judgement She knew his stand would be crucial At 12 30 pm, when people began moving out she called Jagjivan Ram aside *Aap zara ruk jaye* (Please stay back for a while) " He assured her of his support

On 16 June P N Singh, a Delhi based politician belonging to Chandra Shekhar s group and member of the metropolitan council visited Jagjivan Ram The Congress parliamentary party was to meet on 18 June to decide what to do You people must do something!" Singh exclaimed, 'otherwise the party will finish '

Age or health doesn t now permit me to but if Chandra Shekhar takes the lead, I'll support him answered Ram

"We had talked to seventy MPs by then said P N Singh 'If Babuji had come in with his eighty, we would have got even more to join us and ask for her resignation

Chandra Shekhar himself had certain reservations To begin with he didn t believe Jagjivan Ram! The latter had promised support on various issues at various times but had not come forward at the actual moment However there was a finer ethical point about which Chandra Shekhar was very conscious I don t want to join issue with Mrs Gandhi on the court decision I want to do it on the basis of policy and economic issues

Jagjivan Ram endorsed the party decision in favour of Indira Gandhi staying on and moved with the majority in parliament supporting her But he was also very clear that in the event of electing an interim prime minister, it should not be Swaran Singh or Kamlapati Tripathi (whom Mrs Gandhi felt safer with), but he, Jagjivan Ram, the seniormost minister who should be the obvious choice The question ultimately never arose, but Mrs Gandhi did not forget what she thought had amounted to another act of perfidy on his part

Then on 26 June 1975, came the emergency

When he was called to a cabinet meeting at 6 am at the prime minister s residence Jagjivan Ram was told like the rest of his cabinet colleagues that the emergency had been imposed, opposition leaders, and even Chandra Shekhar had been arrested He returned home to 6 Krishna Menon Marg to find the red feathers in BSF berets glowing in the sun all around his house, and CID

personnel stationed outside They were moving around inside too and his personal and official staff were all dead scared He was not under house arrest, but his movements were under surveillance. Bahuguna was one of the first to visit him. P N Singh s reaction on hearing of Chandra Shekhar s arrest was to ring ' Babuji " ' I thought he too might be arrested "

When he met him Jagjivan Ram's eyes were full of tears He spoke to him in Bhojpuri ' The democracy we have fought for is finished The responsibility is on you young people now '

As a safeguard against any taperecording device, the telephone receiver had been kept off the hook

Jagjivan Ram had lost the gamble He realized that his resignation at that point would be taken as a gesture of protest and he too could be in jail. He was too old, and too much of a politician to risk that

But that night in his diary he noted This is a Black Day

2 Fear of a Left Take Over

'Sanjay took over on the 26th of June' affirmed Siddhartha Shankar Ray, at that time chief minister of West Bengal 'After that I was nowhere. I was out of touch, and out after the emergency They didn t want her to be accessible to anyone'

'But you were in favour of the emergency,' I pointed out to him

"Yes, but I wanted it only for three months Before it was declared the PM had had numerous reports that showed the law and order situation was very grave To me it seemed obvious that the emergency should be there for a short period and to be used only for the purpose of bringing back sanity to the country But soon after we were completely out of the picture'

The fifty-seven years old Siddhartha Shankar Ray, grandson of the great C R Das,[1] had three generations of friendship with

[1]C.R Das called *Deshbandhu* who died in 1925 at the age of fifty five was a lawyer and friend of Motilal Nehru Indira s grandfather Das presided over the Gaya session of the Congress in which there was a split in the party over the issue of participation in government Das and Motilal Nehru founded the Swarajist Party composed of 'pro-changers' as against the 'no-changers'

the Nehrus along with a common political background in the Congress behind him Till 25 June, in fact, he was still one of the few who could meet '*Indira*'—*as he called her—not only* as prime minister, but also as associate Tall enough to tower over most people, and with a slight stoop, the big built, bespectacled Ray had the easy confidence of a man of talent and affluence He is a barrister and so is his wife, Maya Ray,[2] also till then a member of parliament The two of them could chat animatedly over meals in the Gandhi home with a happy sense of familiarity

Siddhartha Shankar Ray s admiration for Indira Gandhi as a political leader was genuine and as he said later, 'We almost worshipped her" But he did not mince words when occasion demanded, at least till the year 1974 He felt that Bansi Lal held Sanjay in his clutches by having manoeuvred to get him the land he wanted for Maruti But when he learnt more about the actual business he thought he should warn Indira Apparently, they had a meeting Sanjay was present Ray listed one, two, three four points and discussed them with the PM He then turned to Sanjay

You shouldn't be doing this, its unethical, ' he said

' But every businessman does it, remonstrated Sanjay

Every businessman is not the prime minister s son or Nehru s grandson '

The reference to Nehru could not have appealed to Sanjay for he does not hold sacred his grandfather s ideas But then his later attitudes betray much the same lack of consideration towards the opinions of some of his mother s colleagues And those of his mother too "She was perfectly rational analyzed a top official ' but as soon as it came to Maruti and Sanjay, she would just clam up"

In 1974 however, Siddhartha Shankar Ray did not suffer for having voiced his opinions on Sanjay s activities unlike Haksar

[2]Maya Ray charming and fifty was schooled in England She carries a vy accent which does not preclude an equally heavy Indian commitment. Law and social work are her permanent preoccupations but politics? "I have everything I want I have known and seen the best," she says I am not greedy for what politics seems to mean for other people—prestige and money I already have that." She lost her seat to parliament in the gale which swept away the Congress in northern India, including West Bengal in the March elections.

who had, earlier The family connection was too strong as were also, till then, the Left alignments in the party in favour of the Satpathy Yadav Ray Barooah combine Also Jayaprakash Narayan s movement was raising its hydra head and it was necessary to keep party colleagues in a cooperative frame of mind and at her side At this point Mrs Gandhi could not afford to disregard the compulsions of democratic sanction within the party even if she had finally decided to shake off her leftist dream But she was beginning to feel hemmed in from all this too She had gone as far as to sign a treaty of friendship with the Russians to counteract the pressure from USA in 1971

When Nixon s secretary of state Henry Kissinger made his secret dash to Peking via Islamabad he warned Indira against an Indian attack on Pakistan over Bangladesh He said that China would help Pakistan but the US would not come to India s aid D P Dhar,[3] who had come back from his assignment as India s ambassador to Moscow only in June that year, flew to Moscow immediately and came back with an assurance in August 1971 Soon after, Andrei Gromyko the Soviet foreign minister, arrived in India to sign the friendship treaty

There had been a feeling earlier that nobody was our friend This proved the contrary observes a political colleague of Mrs Gandhi

After India won the war and the assembly elections in 1972 brought the electorate virtually to her feet Indira Gandhi s position skyrocketed *internationally, as also* on the domestic front But the expectations of the people rose in direct proportion to her popularity It was not as if she was not aware of the priorities I personally feel that the whole pattern of development undertaken in most of the world is the wrong pattern of develop

[3] An aristocrat born in a feudal family influenced by Marx and Nehru Durga Prasad Dhar (fifty seven) or DP as he was known to a vast circle of friends made his mark as an administrator diplomat and a suave and skilled negotiator politician and parliamentarian This is how he was described in his obituary when he died in New Delhi on 12 June 1975 as ambassador to Moscow with the rank of minister

As a Kashmiri Dhar was involved in all the movements that made Kashmir such a focal point of the Indian political scene He was a minister in every cabinet till Mrs Gandhi sent him for the first time to Moscow as ambassador and then made him union minister for planning His contact with Nehru in 1938 was a decisive turning point for DP

ment for India," she said in as late as 15 November 1975, 'and that if we go along these lines, whether in industrialization or in the fields of medicine or in the field of education we shall never be able to reach out to the poorest in our land Today, in the affluent countries, more and more is being spent on less and less people And we find somewhat the same pattern in our country '[4]

After 1972 there was a programme to take successive steps on land reforms, urban ceiling agricultural tax, and other measures which struck directly at the privileged and moneyed groups

'But I ve always felt that Mrs Gandhi was very hesitant in accepting and deciding a course of action, even since 1966 in the economic field,' observes A M Khusro, the noted economist 'This was attributed by many to her own lack of an economic framework perhaps a virtual lack of confidence in the correctness or otherwise of a suggested course Whether it was price policy about foodgrains or industrial policy, control of monopoly houses or food zones I found that the mind of the highest authorities was not clear a bit of ad hocism remained This may have had something to do with the hesitancy at the prime minister's level '

Intuitively she s always been a liberal and for the poor man,' says Chandra Shekhar and then adds the ruthless assessment but she lacks conviction When it comes to a clash with vested interests she s not prepared for the confrontation "

This was evident even in her conflict with Chavan over the point of abolition of privileges and allowances given by the British and a responsibility inherited by the Indian government towards the former princely rulers of India She was in favour of withdrawing the privileges but not the privy purses It was Chavan who had a resolution pushed through by Mohan Dharia[5] in the All India Congress committee session in June 1967 which

[4]Indira Gandhi in *Consolidating National Gains* (DAVP p 47) an address delivered on 15 November 1975 to the fifty sixth session of the general council of the Indian National Trade Union Congress in Delhi

[5]Early in life Mohan Manikchand Dharia born in 1925 in Nate (Maharashtra) became interested in the trade union movement He joined the Congress only in 1961 A lawyer his strongly held views on the economy made him one of the Young Turks and took him to the position of minister of state for planning in Mrs Gandhi s government in 1971 He told me in an interview once (much later) that Mrs Gandhi did not seem interested in any substantive economic change and no action was taken on the notes he used to send her Mohan Dharia looks very gentle for all the fire that may lie within

amended the official resolution seeking to curtail "the privileges other than privy purses enjoyed by the ex rulers," by asking for the abolition of privy purses as well "Who could help it!' exclaimed Chavan 'The prime minister came in later The motion was moved to get the amendment passed and naturally those who were interested in it remained behind Others who took the Congress casually, left "[6]

But even Chavan admitted that though the prime minister felt, like most other ministers that she had been hustled into accepting the resolution, she was not against it The plea she made when the bill came up for discussion in the Rajya Sabha in 1970 was that she had been a little disturbed because of the manner in which the resolution had been passed by a snap vote in the AICC when only twenty five members had been present, whereas the total membership was as much as 755 with 315 members actually having attended the session

In 1969 it was the same Mrs Gandhi s clash with Morarji Desai was precipitated by P N Haksar She was unwilling to accept Desai s resignation after relieving him of his finance portfolio and before the nationalization of fourteen banks a move she seemed to have carried out with great aplomb It was this which had again won her the raving support of the masses at that time But she was prepared to go only up to a point and no more When she finally yielded to the persuasions of Haksar and the others and the letter accepting Desai s resignation was signed Haksar sent an aide poste haste to the Delhi station of All India Radio and had the decision broadcast in the news immediately

The result was that the news was announced even before the letter reached Desai He felt humiliated and said so but Haksar had the satisfaction of achieving a *fait accompli* and of not letting Mrs Gandhi have second thoughts

Her stand had shown a greater concern for political expediency

[6]T V Kunhi Krishnan *Chavan and the Troubled Decade* pp 164 65 The author makes the point clear The Congress Governments in Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan Gujarat and Mysore were receiving considerable support from the princes She was reluctant to take an inflexible stand on the issue and lose the support of the princes She also thought that the abolition of the privy purses would reduce the confidence of the people at home and abroad in the pledged word of the Government The written demand made by some Congress MPs for the immediate abolition of the privy purses embarrassed her all the more

than for progress at the sociological level, though it was she who got the maximum benefit out of it in terms of acquiring the image which got her the party support in 1969, and the votes in 1971 and 1972

Later, in her dealings with Chandra Shekhar, Mrs Gandhi invariably remained evasive on ideological issues Soon after she had established her tremendous rapport with the masses in 1971 with the *Garibi Hatao* (Remove Poverty) slogan that caught on like a highpowered sales campaign, she called Chandra Shekhar

'We must do great things for the country If you cooperate, we can do a lot I want your cooperation," she said

Of course," said Chandra Shekhar "I'm a member of the party I am ready to do what you want '

But nothing more was said

After some time she called him again

Something has to be done for the poor! she exclaimed "We must redeem our pledge to the people Why don't you draw up a plan?

He took her seriously enough He prepared a detailed note on various aspects which he thought could be tackled urgently, and handed it in to her

Once again she said, "You must cooperate with me, then we can go ahead. '

No further action was taken on the note

Chandra Shekhar was both upset and perplexed But another politician friend of his laughed

'You think she meant it? She just wanted to know if you wanted to be a minister She was giving you the opportunity to say so '

Chandra Shekhar s disillusionment began to set in when he found her entire tone changed after 1971 Things became especially clear in her address to the Indian Chambers of Commerce on 10 April that year where she argued for a better understanding with the private sector

She was mild and compromising in her approach "There is always scope for an honest difference of opinion regarding the wisdom and otherwise of particular polices said Mrs Gandhi But mutual recriminations do not take us far As good democrats, we all have to function within a common framework which has the support of the people Her tone was equally mild when

she went on to talk about imbalances in the economy, the expan sion of government investment in the economic structure, or even when she urged industry ' to share with the government the task of generating greater employment [7]

In a May editorial of his magazine *Young Indian*, Chandra Shekhar spelt this disappointment out in concrete and percepti ble terms

By 1972 he had become really cynical They had had a spate of committee meetings in the housing ministry when Gujral was minister of housing on the tricky question of urban land ceiling [8] A meeting was then fixed in Finance Minister Y B Chavan s room in which the prime minister was also expected to be present There was a telephone call from Chavan

You can make me sign on a blank paper Chandra Shekhar said I ll accept even the minimum programme that you decide upon

You re very generous today laughed Chavan

' I know she doesn t mean to do it

And sure enough at the meeting after the discussions when it came to finalizing the report Mrs Gandhi turned around and said The Sardar (Swaran Singh)[9] had very strong views on this

[7]Indira Gandhi s inaugural address to the forty fourth annual session of the Federation of Ind an Chambers of Commerce and Industry delivered in New Delhi on 10 April 1971

[8]The *Urban Land (Ceil ng and Regulation) Act 1976* came into force finally on 17 February 1976 in eleven states and the union territories and in six states later It is meant primarily to implement the policy of urbanisation of urban land but the responsib lity of administering the act lies with each state A central coordination committee was set up with representation from the states and the Centre to review the progress in implementation To help resolve difficulties the Centre issued guidelines which it made haste to point out do not have legal sanctity beyond the provisions of the Act itself

[9]I think it is the ex prime minister of Pakistan Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto who said that Sardar Swaran S ngh was one of the cleverest negotiators he had met for he could conduct a dialogue with the soft deceptive air of conciliation which committed him to nothing but others to hope

Mrs Gandhi made Swaran Singh defence minister in 1966 and then minister for external affairs in 1970 He was dropped by her after the emergency because of the ambition that began to stir even in his disciplined heart Later he became chairman of the committee on constitutional amendments set up by the Congress pres dent which drew up the recommendations for the controversial amendments to the Constitution that followed A social

Let us consult him first "

' The poor Sardar wasn't there " recalls Chandra Shekhar, ' nor had he interested himself in this She again used it as an excuse '

In 1969, the Congress Party Left was fairly cohesive and comprised of those who had grown from within the Congress and the socialist movement—men like Chandra Shekhar, Krishan Kant,[10] Mohan Dharia, K D Malaviya,[11] and Dev Kanta Barooah—and those who came in after a brief encounter with the Communist Party of India—people like Nandini Satpathy who joined the Congress in 1952 when she was only in her twenties Inder Kumar Gujral, Chandrajit Yadav, K V Raghunatha Reddy,[12] K R Ganesh,[13] Nurul Hasan,[14] and D P Dhar, who exercised power

necessity should prevail over individual right he told me in an interview this is the underlying philosophy behind the desired changes Sardar Swaran Singh is seventy

[10]Krishan Kant is fifty from Amritsar a member of the Rajya Sabha since 1966 and in the Janata Party He never attained ministerial office but formed a group with Dharia, Chandra Shekhar, and others He is short wears spectacles looks the typical gentle soul of a farmer turned city boy and specializes on the subject of land reforms What he said to me in an interview five years ago was almost prophetic No land reforms are ever implemented through bureaucratic machinery

[11]Keshav Deva Malaviya seventy three an older socialist of the Congress Party and Feroze Gandhi s boy scout hero of the thirties was inducted into government by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Malaviya went out under a cloud in 1963 and remained in comparative exile till Mrs Gandhi brought him back in 1974 as minister for petroleum and chemicals He is a tiny man but there was nothing small about his ambitions until he fell to the new rebellion against the Congress in the March elections

[12]Fifty three years old K V Raghunatha Reddy is from Vellore (Andhra Pradesh) and came into politics through academic connections and as an advocate via the Peace Conference He has had an uninterrupted parliamentary career since 1962 He first became minister of state for industrial development and company affairs in 1967 and ended up as minister of labour and rehabilitation in 1973

[13]K R Ganesh is one of those who suffered the political axe soon after the emergency when he was minister of state for revenue and banking 1971 75 His drive against smugglers and hoarders was one of the bright points of the emergency period Born in Port Blair in 1922 he is young enough to make it back to the political arena

[14]Nurul Hasan the fifty six year old historian from Aligarh and Oxford turned politician in 1972 as minister of state for education and social welfare and culture A communist background did not prevent his all ance with the princely house of Rampur (he married the Nawab s sister) nor d d his academic antece-

cularly the top heavy people"

If she did not repose full confidence in a person in the first place, where did the question arise of anyone ever letting her down?

Not only did Indira Gandhi not trust a person completely herself, she did not let anyone trust her completely either She worked out a theory of parallel politics which she practised with such skill that it kept everyone guessing In 1969 even within the leftist group whose support had helped build her image as the new Messiah of the downtrodden she sought to create a division There was for instance, a meeting of the Congress Left at R K Sinha s[17] house where everybody from Chandra Shekhar to Chandrajit Yadav, were gathered There were Krishan Kant Nandini Satpathy Mohan Dharia Raghunatha Reddy K R Ganesh Amrit Nahata,[18] K P Unnikrishnan[19] Chintamani Panigrahi[20] Shashi Bhushan[21] and others They argued that the

[17]R K Sinha is fifty seven from Faizabad Lucknow University and the socialist parties—the Congress Socialist Party and the Socialist Party He came into prominence as a member of the steering committee of the Congress Forum for Socialist Action and then as president of the forum s national conference in 1969 Because of his leftist views he became one of the group that created an impact with Mrs Gandhi in 1969 Sinha was elected member of the Lok Sabha in 1967 and has a special interest in foreign affairs

[18]Amrit Nahata was associated with the Communist Party of India at one time but became an active enouph member of the Congress to be on the advisory committee of the Rajasthan Pradesh Youth Congress during 1963 66 and the Jodhpur District Congress committee at the same time His old love was the All India Peace Council and he became its secretary in 1969 71 and also member of the Lok Sabha in 1967 70 Born in Barmer (Rajasthan) in 1928 there is nothing in his background to suggest that he could produce films and that too such newsmaking ones like *Kissa Kursi Ka* which was not only proscribed after the emergency but which seems to have vanished—prints negatives and all! Nahata is undaunted and is planning another one—*Kissa Nasbandi Ka*—which might indeed see the lights of a cinema hall

[19]K P Unnikrishnan was born in Coimbatore in 1936 He is unmarried and a journalist with a political streak running through him which brought him first to Lohia, a subsequent disenchantment and then to Indira Gandhi He was associated with the Congress Forum for Socialist Action till it was wound up and he became a member of the Rajya Sabha For a man of energy his interests are strangely passive—cards and chess

[20]Fifty five years old Chintamani Panigrahi is a writer and journalist from Orissa and was Congress member of the Lok Sabha from 1957 to 1962 He was re elected 1967 A former editor of *Prajatantr* and the daily *Matribhum* he seems to have concentrated his energies more on social welfare than on anything else

[21]Shashi Bhushan forty nine is from Lashkar (Madhya Pradesh) and was

new Congress working committee should reflect the new mood in the country and substantial representation should be accorded to the Socialist Forum,[22] a Left pressure group which had been formed within the Congress during Jawaharlal Nehru s time.

When Mrs Gandhi learnt of this, she quietly called Chandrajit Yadav Nandini Satpathy, and Raghunatha Reddy aside saying ' I ll take you why do you want the others?" By pitting Chandrajit Yadav against Chandra Shekhar, who represented the broad Left she sparked off a crisis in the socialist forum itself This was when Sant Bux Singh, a Congress member of the Rajya Sabha and a former communist, coined the term pro-CPI elements for a group of Congressmen He used this term for the first time to accentuate the differences between these ' elements' and the so-called "true' Congressmen

Chandra Shekhar had an inkling of this,' says K P Unnikrishnan but we couldn't imagine She thought she could have two Left groups two Right groups, two Centrist groups for then the game is easier I always used to quarrel with Bahuguna about Jagjivan Ram because we thought Jagjivan Ram was the symbol of rightist reaction! We were always trying to find ideological justification for her non ideological moves We never realized she was operating on so many levels '

Unnikrishnan, still unmarried and forty one, came to the Congress in 1960 from Ram Manohar Lohia s Socialist Party He left Lohia because he could not agree with his anti Nehruism nor with his fanatic propagation of Hindi as the national language He was convinced that there was no socialism without democracy that any mass movement in India would be conditioned by its diversity, and that only by strengthening the party structure from within could this be resolved. This is precisely what the

member of parliament from Delhi in 1971 and earlier from 1967 to 1970 He can talk comprehensively of the scientific socialism he values and of people's fitful preoccupation with socialist theory that makes nonsense of the possibility of its implementation. He has graduated into politics from active agitation work An author of many books he has retained his reputation for organization work despite his interest in creative literature.

[22]The popular term for the Congress Forum for Socialist Action which had the "blessings of Jawaharlal Nehru and emerged as a pressure group of leftists within the Congress

wanted when they took up certain positions at Faridabad [23]

"But looking back now," says Unnikrishnan, "I think she was not interested in those things She is neither Left nor Right She didn t want to be tied to any framework She used every framework, with the result that instead of clarifying the issues and enabling the party to do so after a democratic debate, she allowed confusion to grow on the ideological level Basically we had trust—it was always as if somebody else was responsible, not her Sometimes it was Yashpal Kapoor, sometimes Uma Shankar Dixit When the Nehru Forum[24] was set up, we blamed him We forgot he was only the instrument There was always talk of some conspiracy or the other—the CIA the KGB—of conspirators within the party We couldn't understand all this except in the context of what has happened, the bid for supreme power She used the party for that It was only after Sanjay Gandhi s emergence that it fell into a pattern '

There is reason to believe ' ruminated Chandrajit Yadav over the same is ue, that Indiraji wanted to use some elements to help build up Sanjay I think also that she thought both sides could be represented The Nehru forum would go to Sanjay, the socialist forum to her '

' Only a pragmatic ruse? I inquired

' Yes which did not pay," he replied

' From 1971 it was Haksar who was all powerful says R K Dhawan, looking from an insider's point of view, All the people who were removed were ones who did not toe his line—K K Shah [25] Bhagwat Jha Azad [26] Dinesh Singh, B R Bhagat [27] and

[23]The Faridabad session of the Congress held in April 1969 It brought a simmering clash of views between the two ideologically opposed groups of the Left and the Right in the organization into the open

[24]The Nehru Forum was formed in 1973 as another group within the Congress to counteract the influence of the Socialist Forum

[25]Kodardas Kalidas Shah sixty nine launched himself into politics in Maharashtra with the national movem nt in 1930 An old timer with conservative political views he became strangely enough minister for information and broadcasting in 1967 and then governor of Tamil Nadu

[26]Fifty five years old Bhagwat Jha Azad from Bihar was Indira Gandhi s minister of state for education during March 1967 69 and minister of state for labour employment and rehabil tation during 1969 71

[27]Also fifty five Bali Ram Bhagat has been a Congress worker since 1939 and was in the Quit India movement living underground for two years He was

Jagannath Rao,[28] for instance He brought in Siddhartha Ray and Kumaramangalam Only persons with communist thinking ' as Dhawan puts it, ' were brought in and every attempt was made to capture the organization

But Haksar was not doing what Mrs Gandhi did not want After all, it was she who brought him in and it is no apologia for the leader of a country to say that some aide, colleague, external factor or outside influence could work independently of her on such high policy levels Besides nothing in Mrs Gandhi s functioning since she became prime minister suggests that she could have been used It is in fact, the other way round If anything as Chandra Shekhar says she was using them to give a Left projection of her image At that period the idea was to weed out anyone who even smelt of the Right or whoever threatened to become part of a too well knit power group

It was not Haksar but she who was directly involved for instance in dealing with the case of Kishore Lal,[29] labour leader and then Congress member of the Delhi corporation Kishore Lal was a political protege of Chaudhry Brahm Prakash, the father figure of Delhi Congress politics who had supported Morarji Desai against Indira Gandhi in 1967 and was therefore considered a right st Brahm Prakash renounced politics but Kishore became a viable enough force to reckon with She called him along with Haksar to discuss the election strategy for Delhi for the general elections in March 1971 But after the elections when the Congress won its phenomenal victory all over India, as also all seven seats

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a member of the Lok Sabha from 1952 and in the union government in some capacity or the other till 1971 when he was dropped as minister of steel and heavy engineering Thereafter he was speaker in the Lok Sabha.

[28]Reading playing bridge and gardening are the leisurely interests of sixty-eight year-old Jagannath Rao who has had the typical background of what one might call the orthodox Congressman—member of the party member of the AICC, member of the Lok Sabha and minister thereafter according to your dues Rao made it all the way up until 1970 when he became minister of law and social welfare only to fall victim as Dhawan says to the Left!

[29]Kishore Lal a fair round faced, Hindu *pathan* from Peshawar plunged into trade union politics, particularly that concerning banks He had no truck with the Left. He has been a member of the Congress and the Delhi corporation and basically a regional leader With the Janata Party *now he has* a chance to widen his political scope as member of the Lok Sabha, a seat he won for himself in the elections in March.

to parliament from Delhi, and Kishore Lal went to congratulate her along with the others she pointedly turned her face away from him Two months later it was time for local elections to the Delhi corporation She did not allow a single ticket to Kishore s supporters 'The decision for even my own ticket was not announced till the last moment says Kishore It was like deli berately humbling a man, to make him feel a beggar On top of that the entire Congress organization was geared up on the quiet to have me defeated me a Congressman also'

Kishore won, but the Congress Party itself suffered a defeat and lost its majority in the corporation Kishore was automati cally chosen acting leader of the Congress opposition Then began machinations on her part to find an alternate leader Mrs Gandhi s preference wa made known Kishore insisted and got Chandrajit Yadav who was then general secretary to agree that elections should be held by secret ballot Kishore won This time when he went to pay the prime minister his leader a courtesy call, he decided to have it out with her

What have you got against me Indiraji, he asked her One, that I am with Brahm Prakash? Two that I am a crook? Well, let there be an enquiry Nandaji[30] has conducted seventeen enquiries let there be an eighteenth one against me But as far as Chaudhry Brahm Prakash is concerned well I am from the Frontier[31] I was with him, and I will remain with him I am not an ungrateful person I am loyal to my friends

No no exclaimed the prime minister I like such people

Did her general attitude become colder to you after that? I asked Kishore

No I must give her credit for that Her treatment of me became better

[30]Gulzari Lal Nanda now seventy nine has had the frustrating experience of becoming twice an interim prime minister—glimpses of a political paradise that he never quite got over His record in the Congress goes back to the electri fying year of Mahatma Gandhi s first non-cooperation movement in 1921 imprisonment for satyagraha in 1932 and 1942 44 but power from 1952 onwards in free India He was home minister under Lal Bahadur Shastri from 1963 to 1966 That is when the enquiries Kishore Lal referred to were undertaken Nanda never really hit it off with Indira Gandhi and did not survive too long in her cabinet.

[31]The North West Frontier Province now in Pakistan a province whose people are know for their impeccable code of loyalty

At the personal level, that is She realized that he could not be trified with because he had the guts to speak out But that did not make her relent at the political level For five years after that there were continuous attempts to get him out, even to the extent of encouraging a no confidence motion against his leadership Finally, Mrs Gandhi told C B Gupta Congress member of the corporation who was in her confidence, in utter disgust. ' You keep talking of removing him but you don t!

In the process of strengthening the Left she began to realize that it was becoming too strong Though she had had the two forums in the Congress disbanded in 1973 on the plea that she was against groupism of any kind, the battle immediately after for seats to the Congress parliamentary party executive, was based on a clear assumption of the two identities A P Sharma[22] the leader of the Nehru forum, was elected deputy leader of the Congress parliamentary party, but otherwise the socialist forum nominees got themselves a reasonable majority

It was in June 1973 that Nandini Satpathy who, it is said was on intimate enough terms with the prime minister to sit and chat with her in her bedroom, wrote her a troubled letter about the state of the Congress Party structure. She thought the AICC had become a defunct and non political body and she was surprised that no one spoke frankly in Mrs Gandhi s presence while people discussed all kinds of things in private The rot it seems was already beginning to set in But what Nandini Satpathy went on to say almost amounted to an attempt at overriding the organization She suggested that a small group consisting of "Haksar D P Chattopadhyay[23] K R Ganesh Raghunatha Reddy, L N Mishra, and Kuldip Narang[24] could be constituted

[22]Anant Prasad Sharma fifty-eight, is from Bihar He was president of the Bihar Pradesh Congress committee during 1968-72 His accession to the top was quite sudden as an emergency recruit. He was minister of state for industry and civil supplies and then from August 1976 for industry alone.

[23]Debi Prasad Chattopadhyay the professor from Barisal (Bangladesh) is only forty four and won the prestigious position of minister of commerce in 1973 when he was only forty It was a rewarding position from being in the accountant general s office in Calcutta and a teacher there He looks a typical Bengali intellectual but managed to fit into commerce with a snug air of belonging

[24]Kuldip Narang a young thirty five years old industrialist, grandson of the pre partition Punjab leader Dr Gokul Chand Narang whose political ambition almost bought him his way into the centres of power before and after the emergency

to do some secretarial job for you on organizational and political questions and report to you" She added that because these people were all Delhi based Rajni Patel, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, and others could be associated with the group whenever necessary She tried to assure the prime minister that the group was not visualized as a rival or parallel body to the AICC nor to any other organization and that its job would just be to assist her The group could make a study assess an organizational or political problem or situation concretely, and 'put before you whatever solutions it deems fit

But it did mean in effect, the constitution of a supra executive body which could pre empt the functioning of the AICC That frightened Mrs Gandhi and made her suspect the intentions of the group

But their efforts continued after that, it seems, to influence postings transfers of officers and their selections on the basis of their Left orientation It culminated of course in being able to persuade Mrs Gandhi to appoint D K Barooah Congress president in place of Shankar Dayal Sharma Barooah in turn was clear about whom he wanted as his aides

'Help me get D P Dhar as general secretary he said to Dhawan realizing that Dhawan could contribute towards preparing the ground even if the decision was to lie with the PM

Mrs Gandhi saw the pink glow of her socialism turning red though there was a marked difference between the influence of the communist conclave as such, and that of Left oriented Congressmen

The main thing is if you don t have an ism I don t think its very material what coexists with you," opined Dinesh Singh on this Whatever her scheme was, it never got crystallized I wouldn t go so far as to say she was anti communist Anti would mean that she would do something against them

A leader without a cause?' I asked Dinesh Singh Or was Congress the cause?

'When you want to amass power you have to have purpose This was never explained She never spelt it out He Kumaramangalam had a purpose to use her and get power

A year before the emergency she again tried to work up some enthusiasm about a solid programme of action She asked in a

Congress working committee meeting for a report to be drawn urgently for discussion the next day "We worked really hard recalls Chandra Shekhar, who by then was himself a member of the working committee 'By 4 pm, we had the report ready At 5 pm when we went to the meeting we realized she knew what we had drawn up When the points came up for discussion either Nandini Satpathy or Bahuguna, who had been specially invited to attend as chief ministers would raise some objection or the other I really laughed like anything Obviously they had been briefed to create controversy She always used another person never said anything directly herself

'When Siddhartha Ray and Nandini became chief ministers, her ears had been poisoned by this group against the genuine leftists like Chandra Shekhar observes Tarkeshwari Sinha

'With Haksar's influence," said Inder Gujral, the so called leftists got power But the main tragedy in the Congress is that there is no Left entity She never let any entity form

But she began to feel not only an ideological pressure—which as Chandra Shekhar had said, she could never resolve with a strong confrontation—but also a threat The group whatever it was, was becoming too pervasive She had become sensitive to what she thought were their machinations that they would push her to an embarrassingly extreme ideological position, capture the organization and then throw her out That was something she would not brook

She wound up both the socialist and the Nehru forums as a way out D P Dhar did not become general secretary while the fact that Barooah and Haksar could not pull on together could safely be attributed to Mrs Gandhi s tactics in creating an expedient disunity within her own supporters

They did not agree even on the issue of Sanjay, it seems a factor which brought so many disparate groups together after 1973 There was a meeting in Haksar s house where he referred to Sanjay s sojourn in London ' I was his guardian there and even then I used to get complaints he said Barooah walked out angrily saying I was a friend of Feroze I can t hear things against his son It was in as late as 1977 that Barooah could express himself about Sanjay in language that seemed to bubble up from a cauldron of pent up fury Till he spoke out it ensured that Barooah remained in favour and Haksar was out

"How did Siddhartha Shankar Ray remain so close to her then? I asked a close aide

' Siddhartha was playing a double game They thought Sanjay responsible for their diminishing influence, but it was she who had realized what they were up to '

What *were* they up to?

To begin with, they wanted the emergency six months before it was actually proclaimed In a letter to Mrs Gandhi on 8 January 1975, Siddhartha Shankar Ray Rajni Patel and D K Barooah suggested that the situation warranted drastic action and that she should take the vital step to proclaim emergency then itself

Two months before Justice Sinha s judgement came, the central hall of parliament—from where emanates everything from gossip and resolutions to revolt—began to buzz with the rumour that the judgement would go against Mrs Gandhi and that Barooah could become prime minister The rumour definitely found its way through the communication channels to the PM s house

Sita Ram Kesri who had heard the gossip remarked It was to neutralize this that Sanjay was built up

Then came 12 June the day of the judgement

Before any information had actually come through that morning Unnikrishnan feared what to him was the worst

I ve heard disquieting news he said to Barooah ' No no, everything s alright ' replied Barooah Gokhale[35] and Rajni have said so '

Gokhale in fact had sent for Dhawan on the 10th and the 11th to find out where S C Khare[36] their advocate was "He should be present at the time of the judgement In case anything goes wrong he can rush to Delhi and prefer an appeal and we can go to the supreme court Siddhartha Shankar Ray

[35] Sixty two years old Hari Ramchandra Gokhale was brought into politics by Mrs Gandhi straight from the law courts He was advocate and later judge of the Bombay high court till 1966 He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1971 and appointed union minister of law justice and company affairs He could not escape the wrath over the constitutional amendments introduced after the emergency and was literally trounced in the elections

[36] S C Khare acted as one of Mrs Gandhi s senior counsels in the Allahabad high court case

was also in the room when Gokhale said this

I contacted the counsel,' recalls Dhawan 'I felt that Mr Gokhale suspected that the judgement was going to be against us He was laying too much stress about the counsel being present I did not convey my feeling to the PM I only told her what he had said

'Whatever he wants you do' she said 'but I am not going to appeal if I am defeated Have you made any arrangements to find out as soon as it comes?

I have told Jagpat Dubey[37] in Allahabad He ll ring up replied Dhawan

Rumours were rife however

Saheb Sinha belongs to my *biradri* (caste) and will finish madam said a *qaist*[38] gentleman in Lucknow to Mohammad Yunus who was attending a friend s daughter s wedding a month earlier in May 'He wants to create history, and he s done it, I tell you

'I told this to her (the PM) when I returned ' recalled Yunus 'I have heard this from others too' she remarked, 'but what can be done? '

In fact the very day of 12 June 1975 did not augur well for Mrs Gandhi The prime minister was up as usual at 6 am at her house in Safdarjang Road She was planning to wash dress and be ready to face the world by 8 am when at 6 30 am she got the news that D P Dhar had died He had been ill and in Govind Vallabh Pant Hospital She was almost the first of the top leaders to get there

When she returned she went through the daily ritual of meeting the people in the adjoining house at 1 Akbar Road At 9 30 she was back again and preparing to go to office There was no commotion no fear and no anxious moments with regard to the impending judgement

Gokhale rang Dhawan at 9 45 to let him know as soon as the news came through

'At two minutes past ten Sharada Prasad rang Seshan in the office on the Rex phone (direct line) and told him she had been unseated,' recalls Dhawan In the meanwhile, somebody

[37]Jagpat Dubey was Mrs Gandhi s election agent in Rae Bareli.

[38]A caste among the Hindus in north India who were the scribes of the Mughals and are influenced in dress, language, and food by Islamic culture

brought in the ticker tape also The PM was in her room so was Rajiv He was the first to be informed The news was broken to her by him Sanjay was in his factory '

As they all began to go towards the inner side, Dhawan saw Siddhartha Shankar Ray Gokhale and D K Barooah walking in She was standing in front

Everything alright? called out Ray with his usual familiarity

Yes she replied They have unseated me! What steps do I take now? Do I have to resign immediately?

All four huddled into a separate room

What are the charges? shouted somebody There was a rush towards the ticker which was in the room across the porch Here it was Yashpal Kapoor frantically ringing various people he knew in the different states, urging them to issue statements in her favour The APHLC[39] Chief Minister Williams A Sangma was the first to come out with a statement endorsing her leadership When Barooah rang him he said, Yes, yes, Kapoor has already spoken to me I ve already given the statement

Did you meet her that day? I asked Kapoor

No Personally I was against the thought of her resignation I didn t have to ask her what to do I would have done it anyway, he said

What he did was to unleash a publicity campaign with the organizational energy of a dynamo He called in his Campaign Committee[40] members and got them working at break neck speed He had one of the most effective posters out by 2 o clock that afternoon *Inki larai, hamari larai* (Her struggle is our struggle) He gathered 300 volunteers, teachers retail traders students, housewives, advocates, MPs and writers at the office of the campaign committee in the afternoon and had six lakh leaflets divided into 2000 leaflets in each bag distributed by them in the next few days

I don t remember Sanjay saying anything to me that day said Kapoor

But the next day when he went to see Mrs Gandhi, she took

[39]All Party Hill Leaders Conference

[40]The central campaign committee of the AICC was set up in 1974 with Jagjivan Ram as chairman and Yashpal Kapoor as secretary Kapoor used it with his usual organizational skill for a multidimensionl propaganda programme of the *Dynamic Decade* to mark Indira Gandhi s ten years in power

him aside and said "Kapoor, people don t like your coming here so you better lessen it from now on "

As simple as that There had been resentments against his role, his person his functioning, his morals, and even his integrity She had withstood them all, for his loyalty to her had been unquestioned At last even he had come under a shadow It was time for a new order

Yes ' replied Kapoor to Mrs Gandhi "I ve only to discuss one thing with you Then I'll go"

After that he would go to the PM's house to inform her of various happenings, but he saw to it that there weren t too many people around—at lunch for instance, or late in the evening He would talk to her for a brief minute or two and come away It was a one way effort for she never asked him to do anything thereafter

Didn t you ask her what had happened to change her attitude or to make her distrust you?" I inquired

No ' said Kapoor answering with all the blind loyalty of a man from the Frontier ' I had accepted her on a much higher plane than even a boss I've never questioned her

He did point out to me however, that contrary to the reports she had been given that he had spoilt her election case, the day after his evidence had been published in the papers on the basis of his marathon appearance in the Allahabad high court for two whole days, both Siddhartha Shankar Ray and Palkhivala[41] had come to his room to congratulate me on my performance

There was also somebody else who was berated on 12 June inside the PM s house It was Haksar, by no less a person than Barooah himself It was Haksar s evidence that had spoilt the case Barooah was arguing away But his first reaction as he went in to see the PM with Ray and Gokhale when she was talking of resigning was to say something like It may appear graceful after all It may be only for a temporary period We ll appeal we re sure to win

Barooah was among the first to leave He went home and called a number of MPs There were one or two general secre

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taries of the Congress as well but it was to some members from Assam to whom he said I might well be the PM"

Yes, we went to Barooah s house" said Unnikrishnan 'But no meeting can ever take place there, its always a continuing dialogue In fact, I suggested that she should not have time to have second thoughts I thought JP s movement in Bihar had fascist overtones I strongly suspected CIA involvement I took it as a political challenge I thought she should continue and we should convene a meeting to endorse this '

When Mohammad Yunus arrived at 1 Safdarjang Road that morning having received a call from Rajiv he met Mrs Gandhi in the corridor She just smiled Within a few minutes he saw an entire line of other ministers of her government beginning to stream in Most of them crowded into the anteroom towards the left and were sitting almost two in a chair Yunus perched himself on a bookshelf The lawyers Siddhartha Shankar Ray H R Gokhale and Nani Palkhivala who was brought in soon were in a conclave in the anteroom towards the right Mrs Gandhi was flitting from one room to another

Most of the people were silent Certainly, in the hearts of many senior leaders the thought was brewing that any one of them could now become prime minister

At 10 45 am the stay order was announced Siddhartha Shankar Ray came into the room and read it out Suddenly the tension unwound India s entire ruling elite gathered there broke into subdued chatter They had been hearing that the judgement might go against Mrs Gandhi but they hadn t believed it

At about 11 am just as Yunus was leaving the room Mrs Gandhi came towards him and said I think I should quit '

This is no way to talk said Yunus

When she said the same thing to Swaran Singh he concluded apparently that she meant it would be in his favour He did not say anything but went straight home and trunk called Jullundur to tell his cronies that he might be the next prime minister

Sanjay had meanwhile rushed back from his factory and was around darting in and out like his mother

The stay order is there We have to think about it Why should you resign? Sanjay is reported to have told his mother

According to Dhawan everybody who came said There s no question of her resigning

Dhawan himself was involved in another kind of exercise after *the stay order had been granted* He was taking down the text of a draft[42] being finalized for senior leaders, who were to issue a statement supporting Mrs Gandhi s continuance in office They were working at the draft in the dining room away from the crowded anterooms, and each minister coming in was giving his suggestions

But there was no sign of Chavan There were whispers about the possible significance of his absence on such an occasion Was he planning something? Was he keeping his options open? Did he want her to resign? He had stood by her all these years—except once at the Bangalore meeting of the Congress working committee on 10 July 1969, when he had voted against her wishes in favour of Sanjeeva Reddy, the presidential candidate *Did Chavan s absence now imply that he was not with her any* more? Mrs Gandhi was beginning to have doubts

Chavan in fact, had gone to see the arrangements regarding the body of D P Dhar, which was to lie in state in Delhi, to be flown to his home in Srinagar that evening Chavan returned home to 5 Race Course Road at 10 am, only to have a man rush in and tell him that the PM s election had been set aside He just sat down He could not imagine what this was going to imply He did not think he had to rush to Mrs Gandhi immediately, as if to offer condolences He just needed time to think Finally *t 11 30 am he decided to go to Safdarjang Road and find out* what was happening It was only when he reached there that he realized his absence had led to all kinds of speculation

When he walked into the dining room, however the text of the draft was nearly ready But Inder Gujral saw it remarked that it was ' too anaemic and re drafted it Everybody then signed in Dhawan s presence, the first to do so being Jagjivan Ram and Chavan

By noon, the situation was very clear recalls Yunus ' She was not going to resign '

Sanjay appeared cool on the surface but *was molten lava* inside This was the day his experience of political campaigning was going to be fully realized I think he felt he owed it to his mother to bolster her strength at this moment and make up

[42]P N Haksar denied to me that he had had anything to do with the draft while Dhawan says he took the dictation from him Gujral makes his own point

been at the age of seventy three, the chief executive councillor of the Delhi administration, a position equivalent to the rank of a state chief minister Radha Raman[43] was in Srinagar the day of the judgement His own behaviour was typical of the rest

'I got to know at 11 am from the news on radio My first reaction was one of shock Then I couldn t decide whether it would be good for her to resign or continue I was in the process of contemplation "

That did not prevent him from sending a telephonic message to Delhi which read Mrs Indira Gandhi s leadership is indispensable for the country at this crucial juncture " Like other Congressmen, he needed time to think But also like them when he reached Delhi, he was swept away by the heady mixture of stage managed rallies, by sycophants who could breathe only the air of power, and by genuine enthusiasts all of them saying "*rehna hai rehna hai* (she must stay, she must stay) "

'So the stage of contemplation was over,' remarked Radha Raman with a whimsical shrug 'Fifty per cent were definitely overwhelmed by the opinion that existed and was created Others were apprehensive about the party s dismemberment What is democracy, after all? If eighty per cent feel one way what should the twenty per cent do? Either they go out or express themselves in a feeble voice! '

Like a typical old timer *Dada* as he is known among politicians journalists and friends is a sentimentalist He was convinced that if Mrs Gandhi had asked Jagjivan Ram to take over for a while she would have won him over completely and he would have been at her feet

But she didn t trust anyone, he continued "If she didn t have faith in her council of ministers or in him then '

No said P N Singh another younger more realistic Congressman She would never have been able to come back to power if she had given it up at that time She was right in her assessment Nobody would have let her return '

Karan Singh[44] then union minister for health and family

[43]Radha Raman was born in 1904 and joined the Congress in 1919 He was a member of the Delhi Pradesh Congress committee from 1918 to 1951 and president in 1949-52 He was chief executive councillor of the Delhi metropolitan council till the election in 1977

[44]Karan Singh was born in 1931 appointed regent of his former kingdom,

planning in Mrs Gandhi's cabinet, and former maharajah of Kashmir is a handsome idealist of forty six A Sanskrit scholar, poet and musician he was one of the first to voluntarily give up, after independence, one of the richest privy purses apportioned to the Indian princes With this background of a confident and detatched political life behind him, it was perhaps understandable that he would be one Congressman to voice a frank opinion He wrote to her 'You can offer to resign,' he suggested, 'Let the president decide '

'Many of us felt that way, he added 'The question was not of legality In politics it is more a political even a moral question The 12th of June was really an ominous day in her life It explains the shift as in a rifle A slight deviation and you find another direction altogether In the Upanishads they say there are always two paths and there is always a moment of choice Her not resigning led to everything that happened thereafter'

On 13 June when Gujral asked Chandra Shekhar for his views on the prime ministerial predicament, the latter answered The days of Mrs Gandhi being a democratic leader are over Now she will have to be a dictator"

Indira Gandhi became the victim of her own propaganda machine, and the opposition was like a tiger having tasted human blood For the first time she saw the possibility of her power being snatched away under circumstances in which she could not defy the party or the opposition by going to the people for a vote—like she did in 1969 or 1971 And for the first time the opposition saw the possibility of obtaining that power after years of being in the wilderness and waging its battles in a vacuum Both were impatient one almost paranoic in her defiance and the other almost frenzied with hope Indira Gandhi said in a rally outside her house that she had tolerated this campaign of calumny because she was right She had suffered lies and abuse in the interest of the common man It was not a question of choosing

the state of Jammu and Kashmir in 1949 He was governor from 1965 to 1967 and came into central politics as minister for tourism and civil aviation from 1967 73 He was minister for health and family planning but managed to steer clear of controversy during the emergency

'Indira Gandhi or the Congress, it was her duty to serve the people

In Ahmedabad, riding high on the wave of his success in having had the Gujarat assembly with its overwhelming Congress majority of 140 seats (in a house of 168) dissolved Morarji Desai Congress (O) leader sent out a desperate feeler He said he would under no circumstances agree to become chief minister of Gujarat even if the people insisted upon it But if the people wanted him to become prime minister he would be willing [45]

Indiraji s personality has a mixture of two attitudes said Charanjit Yadav drawing his conclusions after having worked with her closely, both as general secretary in the organization and as member of her government She has a basic faith in democracy but she also wanted a solution for its negative aspects —unnecessary licence and irresponsible criticism which hamper progress She was not clear she was always in two minds about how to reconcile this

By what they did after 1974, the opposition certainly made it easier for her to choose

The Gujarat agitation came in the wake of two droughts and a critical food situation but it was the students who led violent demonstrations against high prices They formed the Nav Nirman Samiti and organized a Gujarat *bandh* with the support of the opposition parties who came in gladly, for they found in this an ideal opportunity to join issue with the ruling party But while the students wanted the Chimanlal Bhai Patel[46] ministry to resign the opposition parties began demanding the dissolution of the assembly itself The agitation made the situation so anarchic that Chimanlal Bhai Patel had to bow out and president s rule was imposed on 9 February 1974 This was followed by a fantastic demonstration of agitational politics Members of the legislative assembly belonging to the opposition parties were asked to resign

[45]The *Times of India* 1 May 1975

[46]Chimanbhai M rabhai Patel born in Chikhodra (Gujarat) in 1929 has a smooth bespectacled face but does not look the academic he has been—professor of economics in Gujarat Vidyapith (Ahmedabad) professor and dean of the arts faculty St Xavier s College (Ahmedabad) and principal of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Arts and Commerce College (also in Ahmedabad) Politics came only from 1954 onwards After his ministry fell his disappointment with the Congress stance regarding him led to h s forming the Kisan Mazdoor Lokpaksh He lost in the elections held in June.

while those belonging to the Congress were pressurized into doing so Morarji Desai brought in the element of moral compulsion, by going on an indefinite fast to compel the dissolution of the assembly

When the prime minister gave in and the assembly was dissolved on 15 March Jayaprakash Narayan realized that he had as he said found the right means to achieve his objective

I wasted two years trying to bring about a politics of consensus It came to nothing Then I saw students in Gujarat bring about a political change with the backing of the people and I knew this was the way out [47]

Narayan made Bihar the area of a similar operation where again the students had already organized a protest centred around the non availability of essential commodities As in Gujarat the opposition parties that joined in were the Bharatiya Jan Sangh and its militant cadres, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad the Congress (O) the Socialist Party political extremists and religious cultists like the Naxalites and the Anand Margis This time the pulls of power were too strong and even the MLAs of the opposition parties were not united in the move to offer resignations Out of a total of 318 only forty two tore themselves away from office

But gradually through the year, the movement built itself on the basis of Jayaprakash Narayan s concept of total revolution—and on three specific demands electoral and educational reform and the removal of corruption Take a single instance Narayan said that of election expenses which is the source of great corruption in politics Crores of rupees unaccounted money, is collected from black marketeers There is no accounting There are no entries about this money in the accounts of the Congress Party Nobody knows how the money is spent and by whom ' [48] Narayan wanted election expenses curtailed so that a poor candidate a peasant, or worker of a poor party could have an even chance to find a place in the power hierarchy He had hoped he said, to get a wire or letter from Indiraji that when a man like me is willing to fight against corruption, she will extend her full cooperation [49]

[47] *Everyman s Weekly* 3 August 1974
[48] *Ibid.*, 22 June 1974
[49] *Ibid.*

When Narayan did meet her however he did not know what to think He had asked Chandra Shekhar, who was always very cordial, what the election expenses came to for each candidate

' Seventy thousand," Chandra Shekhar had replied

No ' said Indira Gandhi to Jayaprakash Narayan It s not more than 30 000 '

He asked Chandra Shekhar once more who again confirmed that it was 70 000 Narayan just held this head in his hands She s told me an absolute lie, he mumbled

There was no need for it either " said Chandra Shekhar recounting the incident any AICC member could have revealed the correct amount

Indira Gandhi was not particularly keen on negotiations with Jayaprakash Narayan anyway When it came to finding a solution to the Bihar assembly problem she involved Jagjivan Ram in their talks Whereas she was very suspicious of JP and kept shifting her position recalls Chandra Shekhar who had urged the dialogue all through Jagjivan Ram was very clear right from the start that there should be negotiations But it was he who had to take the blame for the breakdown What was g ven out publicly was that Jagjivan Ram had stuck too solidly to his point that the assembly could be suspended but revived whereas Narayan had wanted its dissolution, and fresh elections

Narayan went back and said in an interview about his talks with the PM I had given several proposals for reforms other wise I was apprehensive that the situation would lead to devasta tion but I was disappointed He said that as a result he had arrived at two firm convictions that the movement was decisive in my life and the people would have to rise in revolt against the establishment [50]

The prime minister still sat quietly

In March 1974 George Fernandes[51] of the Socialist Party

[50] In an interview with Dalip Ganguly *Amrit Ba ar Patrika* 20 December 1974

[51] To author a dissertation on *What Ails the Socialist* George Fernandes had much to show as a background A long history in fact of giving up studies joining the Socialist Party of India organiz ng the working classes and con centrating on the trade union movement He was elected to the Lok Sabha in

formed a national coordination committee for railwaymen's struggle with representatives from all trade unions except the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen The aim was to organize a railway strike which could change the whole history of India and bring down the Indira Gandhi government at any time by paralyzing the railway transport to a dead stop [52] Fernandes himself painted a frightening picture of what such a strike could portend for the nation's economy

'Seven days strike of the Indian railways—every thermal station in the country would close down A ten days strike of the Indian railways—every steel mill in India would close down and the industries in the country will come to a halt for the next twelve months If once the steel mill furnace is switched off it takes nine months to refire A fifteen days strike in the Indian railway—the country will starve "[53]

When the strike came in May 1974, it was ruthlessly suppressed by the disciplinary powers of the government which had been exercised to their very limits There was an outcry The only alternative was to give in to all demands but unfortunately and as always, caught between two warring forces, the poor (railway) worker was hurt badly in the crossfire There were heart rending stories of misery, suffering and brutality There was for instance, the case of a worker hauled away by the police whose wife was raped by policemen who had staved back When she found she was going to have a bastard child she wanted to get rid of it before her husband was released from jail but no doctor would agree to take the case She committed suicide in the end

That this could have happened in normal times in the exercise of maintaining law and order in the face of men's right to strike,

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1967 and became chairman of the Socialist Party in 1973 He was president of the All India Railwaymen's Federation when he organized the railway strike in 1974 and invited the full wrath of disciplinary action from the government He went underground during the emergency and was implicated in the Baroda dynamite case George is like a child said a friend who was with him during this period If he gets something into his head he just wants to do it We saw to it that no harm should come to any human being When the Janata came to power the dynamite case was withdrawn and Fernandes became union minister, now of industries Only forty seven for the first time trammelled by governmental authority he says he finds it an uncomfortable role

[52]Address to the National Railwaymen's Union October 1973

[53]Address delivered in Madras on 29 March 1974

was horrible enough it was also a portent of what could happen in abnormal circumstances The exercise of discipline without cruelty is the elusive condition for good governance everywhere, it seems But Indira Gandhi got away with it for three reasons her authority was unaffected her image still supreme and by then there was in any case, a smouldering desire for stern action on various fronts in the body politic

Indira Gandhi, besides could not afford to have India s severely strained economy suffer a shock as major as the strike would have entailed With the upsurge in Gujarat and Bihar and Narayan s call for general defiance there was also the feeling that the very act of good administration needed a much firmer handling of affairs by Mrs Gandhi s government

But efficient administration by itself had as little meaning as total revolution without a framework Mrs Gandhi did not feel she had to win the people to come out with the effective implementation of a twenty point programme at that stage nor did Narayan venture beyond saying that if Gandhiji used to say one step is enough for the nation for us also one step is enough I am not a Gandhi But I also do not like to put forward a big long term programme [54] A clash was inevitable Indira Gandhi refused to negotiate on any of Narayan s demands, and he in turn refused to wait for the elections which were only a year and a half away to take his chance at the polls

Narayan s rebellion was based on the right to recall elected members of an assembly or parliament if they had forfeited the confidence of the people even half way through their term Mrs Gandhi felt she could not enter into a significant discussion with him because she thought he was stoking the revolutionary fire not for the people but against the institutions of democracy He argued that the election process itself had been subverted As early as 1973 he had urged the younger generation to start a Youth for Democracy movement but said at the same time that since independence elections have been growing more and more irrelevant to the people and to the democratic process [55] Mrs Gandhi said that people could see it for themselves *that the electorate* had been mature enough to put opposition governments in power

[54]*Everyman s Weekly* 22 March 1974
[55]An open letter issued to the youth on 9 December 1973

in three states where they had wanted them, nor had anything been done to stop them from exercising their right Besides, general elections had been held regularly and there was a free and uncontrolled press

On her part Mrs Gandhi still did not feel impelled to take strong action

By 12 June 1975 Jayaprakash Narayan had called upon the police and military personnel not to obey unlawful orders in twenty four public meetings held in UP, Bihar West Bengal Hyderabad Orissa, Haryana Madhya Pradesh, Kerala Karnataka and Delhi He had first spelt this out indirectly at a meeting in Patna at the Gandhi Maidan on 5 June 1974 This is a people s struggle Policemen are also low paid They get three or four or five hundred rupees a month But the rupee is now worth only one fifth of its value some time back They also have to maintain families educate their children marry their daughters Don t they realize these things? Let them obey orders If anyone indulges in violence or sabotage they should arrest him But they should not fire upon people indiscriminately [54] By the 18th of May he was saying that the army should be discriminate about obeying the ruling party if the orders went against the constitutional rights of the people

Narayan did not specify how and at what time a soldier should decide whether an order was constitutional or not The suggestion meant that the instruments of governance would acquire an authority independent of the policy making executive Once that happened there was no guarantee that it would not decide to over throw that executive in the name of safeguarding the Constitution

Did Jayaprakash Narayan not have enough faith in the capacity of the Indian voter to remove a party executive which was acting against its interest? Despite the steadily growing machinery of state influence and money power the electorate had turned the Congress out from half the states in India in 1967 put them back when it became disenchanted with the coalition governments of the opposition and retained it where it wanted them—in Kerala Tamil Nadu and later Gujarat. It was discriminating enough to support the Congress as a central party but to throw it out in regional elections

[54] *Everyman s Weekly* 22 June 1974

It is somewhat inexplicable why Jayaprakash Narayan did not urge the people to consolidate their interests group together their grievances, amass themselves into a strong force, and vote the Congress out in 1976 when the elections were due Nor did he offer a tangible programme as an alternative to the Congress and Indira Gandhi Either he did not have enough confidence in himself and in the people, or the patience to lead the nation into an electoral battle But he had his point of view which grew from the political situation of a country in which one party had ruled uninterruptedly for twenty nine years, and acquired the stability but also all the ills resulting from long years of power What can the people do the youth do to fight against corruption unemployment poverty? he argued in exasperation Wait quietly for the next election? But what if in the meantime the situation becomes intolerable? What are the people to do? Sit quietly and fold up their arms and silently bear their miseries? That would be Mrs Gandhi s image of democracy silence of the grave

Indira Gandhi could not have done a thing had Jayaprakash Narayan pursued the other slower tactics of a maturing democracy In 1974, she was weak The ceiling on agricultural land disturbing the system of property rights the growth of the public sector the tax rate were issues which affected vested interests in a way that they felt that if they did not strike then they would lose the initiative analyzed an old Congressman At the same time high prices were creating discontent among the poor as well

But to all prevarications made by Mrs Gandhi on economic measures referred to earlier by A M Khusro[57] There was one glaring exception he says, and that was the leadership she provided in late 1973 and throughout 1974 in inflation control policies Suddenly, he collected opinion (through Dr V K R V Rao[58] who had got together with five other economists, of

[57]Suave eloquent and fond of poetry and the arts A M Khusro has a sharp concise manner of expression which is very convincing He was director of the Institute of Economic Growth from 1970 to 1974 until he joined the Aligarh Muslim University as vice chancellor The exigencies of administrative work have not dulled his capacity for economic analysis He is the author of several books on economics

[58]A voluble intent man with a sweep to his ideas which go with organizational concepts V K R V Rao at sixty nine has all the enthusiasm that made him father figure of the economic field in Delhi He was founder and

proved to be insistent that Mrs Gandhi give up her quasi socialist policies (even the communists called her pre 1974 policies 'quasi socialist') and turn to more western policies —policies more in keeping with the make up of the members of the consortium all of whom are western oriented [60]

On 1 May 1974 the IMF said it had agreed to the purchase of 235 *million SDR by the government of India in support of the* government s programme to reduce the rate of inflation adjust the balance of payments and its economy as a whole to the recent increases in import prices and achieve a satisfactory rate of economic growth According to C H Hanumantha Rao [61] one of the six economists the V K R V Rao-P N Dhar package of economic proposals was actually drawn up to provide a base for India s negotiations with the IMF and World Bank

Novak argues that Mrs Gandhi s speech at Bangalore in April 1974 announcing part of the proposals to stabilize the economy was a beginning without a follow through that various welfare measures taken thereafter met with such strong resistance by vested interests and that cases against anti social elements like smugglers and hoarders stalled by courts on technical grounds that Mrs Gandhi had to go in for the emergency to be able to carry out India s economic resurgence

I don t know about the IMF or World Bank, but nobody could have dealt with Haji Mastan[62] and others under the laws existing then said Mohammad Yunus the emergency was necessary if the laws could not be changed I remember a conversation with Mr Sikri [63] the ex chief justice of India during the

[60]Jeremiah Novak (columnist for the *Asia Mail* (USA) *The Role of IMF World Bank* Emergency Economic Package—1 *Times of India* 1 July 1977

[61]Forty eight years old C H Hanumantha Rao got his post doctorate research fellowship in economics from Chicago University 1966 67 He has been associated with the Institute of Economic Growth since 1961 and became its director in September 1976 He has written several books on various aspects of Indian agriculture

[62]Haji Mastan handsome king of the blackmarket economy played host to Ind a s eminent politicians administrators and other citizens with impunity He was finally held under MISA (*Maintenance of Internal Security Act*) When released he turned reformist and with his vast experience in the field promised to snuff out smuggling with the help of other friends

[63]Sarvamittar S kri was advocate general of Punjab came to the supreme court and became chief justice in 1970

emergency Someone asked him whether there could have been some other alternative to deal with economic offenders None he said, you couldn t get them The laws wouldn t permit it They'd be out on a writ petition or get a stay order the next day''

But whether as Novak says Mrs Gandhi had to undertake this action to push the economy along the lines stipulated by IMF and the World Bank is another point Novak even cited Ashok Sen, Mrs Gandhi s defence counsel in her election case in the supreme court, as saying that "the court case was uppermost in Mrs Gandhi s mind (but) other factors convinced her to call the emergency'[41]

Y B Chavan who as India s finance minister was negotiator with these international agencies feels that when giving a loan, a monetary organization in any part of the world had to make suggestions and get guarantees But there was in fact, a veritable crusade carried on with them for beneficial rates of interest and on the special drawing rights for the developing countries The major problem in India was rising prices, he said ' These began to come down even after the 1974 monsoon session of parliament in 1974 when we introduced the supplementary budget, the compulsory deposit scheme and the package programme by the six economists I remember when I came back from a trip abroad on the 8th or 9th of October the first bit of information given to me at the airport itself was that the prices had come down! He did not think international pressure had anything to do with the promulgation of the emergency Whatever may be said of Mrs Gandhi he exclaimed she s not one to give in to pressure of any kind

Indeed if she had to think in terms of drastic action it should have been in May 1974 when three factors were working together at a high pitch—the threat of the railway strike the threat of Jayaprakash Narayan s movement and IMF persuasions about the economy which could have been interpreted as a threat But even together they did not constitute a threat to her personal position Till as long as that was not so she was normal

In fact Indira Gandhi went along to the utmost extreme that

[41]Jeremiah Novak *The Role of the IMF World Bank* Emergency Economic Package—II *Times of India* 2 July 1977

you can demand of a national democrat leader till 12 June 1975

One cannot imagine a society freer than that which India had been at the time There was no restraint to the abuses that could be hurled at the political leadership or the bureaucratic machinery in public places private homes the press or the market place of a village or district town If Indira Gandhi was called near goddess of a golden era after the Bangladesh war because that made an Indian walk with his nose in the air she was chastized bitterly if two droughts disrupted the economy and the prices went spiralling She was condemned for political prostitution if she sought to manoeuvre her power options within the party or outside the country There were a total of 835 newspapers and 13925 magazines in India which were free to slander abuse praise or eulogize whom they wished Laws of libel are such and court proceedings so protracted and costly that nobody can sue easily for defamation for verbal insult or written gossip

Despite Mrs Gandhi s reservations about the role of the judiciary—which she argued repeatedly should be in tune with the imperatives of a changing society—and the controversial supercession of three judges of the supreme court in the appointment of the chief justice of India in April 1973 [45] which again earned her the reputation of not maintaining the independent sanctity of the law she showed enough respect for it to appear personally in the Allahabad high court to give evidence for ten hours in the case against her

Even in an otherwise critical editorial reviewing the situation

[45]On 23 April 1973 three judges of the supreme court Justice A N Grover Justice K S Hegde and Justice J M Shelat were superceded and Justice A N Ray appointed chief justice of India The question raised was — who should be vested with the right to choose? The Supreme Court Bar Association pointed out that government was litigant in sixty per cent of the cases in the supreme court and therefore should not have the authority to appoint judges of its choice But it went on to admit that the government s claim to be final authority in the choice of judges might not have been so fatal to the rule of law if the government could be trusted to choose only such judges as would be trusted to uphold the independence of the judiciary It seems to me there can be no safeguard except the maturing of a people s political perception With its massive majority in parliament the Congress could change the very law itself

Oddly enough Mohammad Karim Chagla ex foreign minister of India who led the criticism had himself superceded forty three judges when he was *appointed chief justice of the Bombay high court*

the *New York Times* pointed out this aspect 'By appearing in her own defence before the court which has now convicted her of election law violations, Mrs Gandhi properly acknowledged the principle that no one in a truly free society can be above the law If the court's findings are upheld by the supreme court to which she will appeal the prime minister is bound by the same principles to accept the verdict which requires her retirement from office"

To top it all she herself carried on a relentless speech making campaign which inspired the masses to a realization of their own worth, a consciousness of their rights and an impatience with the status quo One may agree with Chandra Shekhar that Indira Gandhi was never prepared to initiate a fundamental confrontation with that status quo Or with Dev Raj Urs[46] chief minister of Karnataka who said In 1971 the party headed by Indiraji had a credibility when it went to the polls There was the Syndicate on the one hand and the progressives on the other We had taken up the ten point programme[47] People believed the Congress was the instrument of change that it would bring down the disparity between the rich and the poor and social justice would be given to all After the 1972 elections we strengthened the ten point programme, but the real points never came up—they came up only during the emergency Maybe in the intervening period the Centre did not think it necessary We became complacent we did not take serious note of what we had promised Why did we keep quiet all those years? We have adopted socialism It is a difficult path We cannot any more run with the hare and hunt with the hound We cannot be with the rich and the poor So far it has meant putting both in the same basket[48]

But Indira Gandhi continued to talk about it all the time and at great length, from town to village and from one corner of India

[46]Fluency is not a luxury for a politician It is the prime requisite D Dev Raj Urs brings a reasoned yet feeling analysis to his arguments which have kept Karnataka politics under his guidance from becoming too explosive even in situations of extreme tension He is old enough at 62 to know how to turn them to his advantage He became chief minister of Karnataka in 1972

[47]The ten point programme was passed by AICC on 23-25 June 1967 as part of its election manifesto Its most controversial item thought to be revolutionary at the time was social control of banking institutions but only a few of its other provisions were implemented.

[48]At the AICC session, Mavalankar Hall (New Delhi) 5-6 May 1977

to another Even if she did not mean to follow it through to its logical conclusion and change the social structure, she made the vast assembly of India s poor feel that they had a stake in the future The fact that later this great unlearned concourse could not only throw Mrs Gandhi out but also her powerfully entrench ed regime at the height of its awesome power is evidence that her ten years of rule before the emergency contributed towards making the people so politically aware that they proved capable of this fantastic exercise in courage and discrimination

I found an example of how important even talk is to the poor when I asked a domestic servant whom he was going to vote for in the local Delhi elections in June I don t know he mumbled Why don t you tell? I was surprised at his doubts because only three months earlier he had been a very enthusiastic votary of the Janata What s happened? I asked Well they ve been in power now all this time he answered sounding very dis appointed None of them have even talked about us poor people He voted Janata all the same but with losing faith Mrs Gandhi on the other hand had kept up such tempo in her affirmations to save the downtrodden the poor and the depressed sections, that their faith in her was shat ered only after years with the extremes of the emergency

She managed to keep even the Communist Party in line The preconditions of socialism are a highly developed independent economy which means production and reproduction of machines the setting up of the public sector in heavy basic key industries—that is why we supported Nehru ' said Prem Sagar Gupta[69] secretary of the Delhi state council of the CPI Mrs Gandhi gave the same basic directions The nationalization of banks in 1969 was expected to strike at the root of capital power monopoly provided of course you change credit policy The abolition of privy purses again hit the foundations of feudal parasites She wanted constitutional amendments to change judicial powers to enable progressive interpretation of social and economic changes

[69]Prem Sagar Gupta came in from the cool hills of Subatu (Simla) Born in 1919 he came into the fiery world of communist politics via ome brilliant academic firsts His activities in the forties alternated between jail and the underground t ll he settled down to membership of the New Delhi municipal committee for thirteen years trade union politics party trips abroad and then secretaryship of the Delhi state council of the CPI

These were policies which in our view were correct She took the necessary steps to try and change a feudal society to a capitalist one But she never took the next step from capitalism to socialism

Till then, Indira Gandhi s political antennae were so sharp and sensitive that they could catch the most delicate shifts in the public mood—which explains the Congressman s oft repeated admiring exclamations that Indiraji has her pulse on the people" She knew that to retain power in India the Left image was the key to the people s sanction That is what she cultivated so sedulously

Perhaps Indira Gandhi did not know she was creating a Frank enstein Perhaps she thought she could handle it provide enough sops from time to time to keep hope ever present, and illusions in tow This only leads one to the irresistible conclusion that she would have willingly followed the precepts that guide an ideal social democrat as long as she were left alone, the other face only showed when she felt cornered

After 12 June, she felt that there was a multi pronged attack converging upon her To begin with, she had always been con scious that some time or the other India could become victim to international power pulls and that she would be the target She made this clear when she lost in the end What has happened is not surprising I was always warning you that there were agencies which would not let us function and would weaken if not destroy the Congress she said to fellow Congress members This is some-times not obvious and always very subtle It was perhaps inevita ble that they would succeed If we helped them I do not know [70]

Besides, there were the opposition parties within the country led by a man as prestigious as Jayaprakash Narayan who were forming themselves into one viable political group whose sole purpose she felt was to oust her The parties were as disparate in ideology as they were in class composition but they had com bined as the Janata Front in Gujarat led by Morarji Desai and managed to defeat the Congress in the elections in May That was clear enough proof of the fact that the opposition had an equal chance at the polls in the event of even a general election provid ed it could rally people around it But instead of giving them the confidence to wait for the right time the Gujarat election whetted the appetite of the opposition

[70]At the AICC session Mavalankar Hall (New Delhi 5-6 May 1977)

Each one of the parties involved had decided already that pressures would be exerted on the legislative electoral, agitational and constructive activity fronts The Socialist Party Chairman George Fernandes held that since the capacity of the parlia mentary system to achieve reform and renewal from within is getting severely limited extra constitutional action and popular initiative become absolutely necessary' [71] E M S Namboodiri pad[72] of the CPI(M) said that the CPI(M) and other left parties are conscious that the problems facing the country cannot be solved through elections and work in the parliamentary forum alone Precisely because of this they do not accept the position that every issue must be solved only through constitutional means [73] There was the flowing eloquence of Atal Behari Vajpayee[74] of

[71]From a resolution released at the Calicut conference of the Socialist Party December 1974

[72]Pattambi was the place in Kerala which gave birth to E M S Namboodi ripad on 14 June 1909 The politics of Kerala were to be considerably influenced by that forty years later *EMS* as he is known left college to join the civil disobed ence movement and served one year in prison for that He was in the Congress till 1935 when his contact with the CPI drew him towards his revolutionary attitudes He joined the CPI in 1937 after which it was a steady rise to election to the politburo in 19J1 He was chief minister of Kerala in 1959 when Mrs Gandhi as Congress president sponsored the mass upsurge against the communists which led to the forced resignation of the duly elected communist government What EMS said then in criticism of her could well be applied to JP s tact cs to oust the duly elected government of Mrs Gandhi

If the opposition (Congress) was so convinced that the majority was against the government why should they be in such a hurry? he had taunted the Congress They can wait for two and a half years (for the next election) when they can get an opportunity The d fference was Namboodiripad s was a state government and could not impose an emergency He had to resign

[73]*People s Democracy* 12 January 1975

[74]Atal Beha Vajpayee is only fifty o1e He was born in Gwal or and is a seasoned speaker who uses emotion lly charged phrases only up to the po nt that they convince not sway the audience He is the founder member of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh l ut has managed to acqu re an image le s impassioned that is generally associated with the policies or attitudes of this party His college day affiliations were with the Congress He joined the Students Cong ress in 1939 and the communist led Students Federation in 194J He was arrested during the freedom movement at the age of sixteen but jail again after thirty f ve years for n neteen month in India s India could still come as a shock

Vajpayee is founder editor of three Hindi dailies—*Rashtriya Dla na*

the Bharatiya Jan Sangh—' The established leadership has been using parliamentary method only as a cover for protecting their evil designs The response cannot be confined to the parliamentary level This war has to be fought in the streets, in the chambers and legislatures in the corridors of power in all sensitive power centres of the establishment ' [75]

Then came the climax The national coordination committee of the BJS, the Congress(O) the SP, the BLD, the RSP, the Akali Dal and other nominated leaders, who had been joined under Jayaprakash Narayan s leadership in November 1974 met again in April the next year to consider the details of a plan for a nation wide civil disobedience movement to start in not more than six weeks as suggested by the Socialist Party This included countrywide tours by top leaders to prepare the people for this great battle' and initiate the struggle by open arrest' On 21 June 1975, Jayaprakash Narayan called upon the armed forces *to consider the struggle as their struggle*

Sarvodaya leader Jayaprakash Narayan is really playing with explosives commented an editorial in the *Pioneer* in as early as June 1974 The movement that he is pearheading to oust the mini try, *gherao* the legislators, to spread disaffection in the ranks of the police force against the government and to plunge the state into a tumultuous 'no-tax campaign may trigger off violence on an epochal scale much earlier than apprehended Ostensibly he is aiming at purging the government of all that is evil But the methods he is advocating are frankly coercive and undemocratic However a year later when the Socialist Party gave its plan for civil disobedience *Pioneer* acknowledged that the attention of political parties is shifting away from struggle on the election preparation implying that the movement as such was petering out

It was no wonder therefore that when the Allahabad high court judgement came the opposition used it like a heaven sent opportunity to whip up agitational fever At the time the first rally

Swadeshi and *Vir Arjun* and has been leader of the Jan Sangh parliamentary party since 1957 As union minister for external affairs in the first Janata government at the Centre he has revealed unexpected qualities of humour and sophistication

[75] From a paper read at the Bharatiya Jan Sangh conference in Hyderabad September 1974

outside the prime minister s house began its slogan shouting in favour of Indira Gandhi, a group of opposition leaders staged a *dharna* in front of Rashtrapati Bhavan raising cries for her resignation By 22 June a ten member committee of the BLD, BJS Congress (O) SP, and Akali Dal was constituted to draw up a plan for action A draft programme suggested by Jan Sangh chief Nanaji Deshmukh[76] included the setting up of agitational committees everywhere, extensive tours by leaders to rouse the people and to organize them in all states collecting of funds publishing of propaganda literature the organization of a Delhi *bandh* to demand the prime minister s resignation the beginning of an indefinite *dharna* outside her house if she did not step down and a systematic effort towards the building up of an irresistible momentum against Indira Gandh_ through processions, demonstrations, and *gheraos* in Delhi On the morning of 25 June a Lok Sangharsh Samiti was formed with Morarji Desai as chairman Nanaji Deshmukh as secretary, and Ashok Mehta as treasurer The aim was to organize a *Lok Shikshan* week from 29 June to 5 July 1975 This would start immediately with rallies meetings and agitations outside the offices of All India Radio and daily demonstrations by groups of satyagrahis in front of the prime minister s residence, demanding her resignation

I think the opposition was perfectly justified in asking Mrs Gandhi to resign It is the business of the opposition to oppose Secondly whatever the extent of the movement for agitations they were conceived within a non violent framework Action could have been taken if those processions, demonstrations, and *dharnas* had led to violence Otherwise as Narayan pointed out in no democratic society had people relied 'wholly and solely on elections to change their plight Everywhere there have been strikes protests marches sit ins, sit outs etc Thirdly even

[76]The fifty eight year-old Nanaji Deshmukh was born in old CP and studied in Pilani He worked actively in the RSS till in 1952 he became founder member of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh and till 1964 remained secretary of the UP Jan Sangh In 1965 he came in as secretary of the central party then became its treasurer and finally its organizer-secretary He went underground on 26 June after the emergency was declared and was caught and arrest d in August 1975 He is now general secretary of the Janata Party A hard core pa ty man that he is he manages to find time for one of the most le sured of occupations—painting!

if there had been violence, it could have been dealt with without declaring an emergency Fourthly, even if there was need for drastic action, it could only have been in Bihar, which was the centre of the movement An emergency could therefore have been declared only in the state of Bihar Fifthly if the movement had indeed percolated down to the popular level in Bihar, as Narayan said then there was in any case no justification for stifling it

Sixth if repressive measures were needed at all they should have been exercised at the height of the movement not when it waned An agitation for the resignation of a prime minister whose election has been set aside on grounds of corrupt practices, even if it is a minor technical matter is not a subversive act nor did it mean that the opposition was calling for the revocation of the entire mandate that had put the Congress in parliament with 361 seats The Congress would have elected a new leader, that is all

Even if it is argued that Mrs Gandhi had the right to stay on after the Allahabad high court judgement on the grounds of the stay order, and that the opposition should have respected that stay order and not indulged in aggressive moves, the point is that it was the supreme court s stand on this which was to be the decisive one The *dharnas gheraos*, and demonstrations of the opposition were as understandable as the rallies, processions, and demonstrations organized by her supporters It was a war of nerves, not weapons

If it was not for Mrs Gandhi being conscious of her loss of face after the high court judgement, compounded by a conditional stay given by the supreme court which had the humiliating conditions attached to it that she could not vote or participate in parliament, Mrs Gandhi would have dealt with the possible law and order problem posed by the opposition tactics with all the authority and force she could derive from her previously unassailable position She had dealt with a far more serious combination of circumstances as I said earlier in 1974 without having to resort to an emergency She could have done the same in 1975 But her position was no longer unassailable

' As speaker of the Lok Sabha and minister, I ve been watching the scene carefully, said G S Dhillon,[77] the sedate Sikh leader

[77]Gurdial Singh Dhillon was a lawyer journalist and agriculturalist born

with a tightly rolled black beard and the smartly camouflaged paunch, and I see that our government was very responsive and too soft I have met several people dignatories and ministers from outside who have asked me and Mrs Gandhi how long she could stand all the lawlessness But he wondered had the opposition driven us to the emergency, or had we driven ourselves to the emergency?

It was Indira Gandhi s own sense of insecurity which drove her to the emergency

As Chavan had said she was not the kind to be affected by international pressure It is more reasonable to assume that she would be even less prone to pressure exercised by an opposition which had not even been able till then to form itself into one unified party The high court judgement robbed her of her options for effective action She could be efficient but she could no longer afford to be high handed with a sullied image However much she may have justified her continuance in office after the conditional stay given by the supreme court she knew she had lost face and that her position within the party could no longer be the same She must have felt it deeply herself which is why as Chandrajit Yadav also remembers she was in two minds about the resignation

But the time for her to resign was not on 12 June It was on 24 June the day the supreme court allowed her a conditional stay She would not only have retained the respect of her colleagues and the loyalty of the masses but taken the wind out of the sails of the opposition She would have snatched away their cause — *Indira Hatao* Their common endeavour to get her out was the one thing that was pushing them to forge a unified strong effective opposition party It would have been rewarding even as a tactical measure Mrs Gandhi s contention was that the opposition was acting in a manner calculated to paralyze the

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in 1915 in Panjwai (near Amritsar) He practised law from 1937 to 1947 He was chief editor of the Urdu *Sher e Bharat* and the Punjabi *Vartman* during 1947 52 and managing director National Sikh Newspapers Ltd He was jailed twice in the freedom movement From DPCC president (Amritsar) to MLA chief whip of the Congress Party in the Punjab legislature a deputy speaker and minister was one step The long leap came from Lok Sabha member in 1967 to Lok Sabha speaker in 1969 71 Dhillon was then union minister for transport and shipping

government and the economy and that strong action was there fore necessary But if a movement like that remains peaceful, but succeeds in paralyzing the government it means the govern ment should admit its inability to handle the situation and go

Indira Gandhi at that stage had only two alternatives in front of her to ensure her continuance in power She could have resign ed, asked for a re election got the people's verdict and come back with all the democratic sanctions in tact Or she could declare an emergency Till then she had been going to the people Why did she not go at that juncture? First of all, with a condi tional stay her image had been marred Secondly, there was no guarantee that the supreme court, in its final judgement would uphold her election Thirdly she might even have risked that if she had been certain of her own standing within the party

The biggest challenge Indira Gandhi faced at the time came from within her own party It was not the opposition which was worrying her after 12 June It was the Congress

Within the Congress were the power conclave and the Left group Having finally found her with a weakened image the big bosses within the Congress began to manoeuvre for a kill It was like the praying mantis that attack one of their own kind As soon as it is hurt or wounded they start devouring it even before it is dead She knew of these moves She was also being pushed hard by some of her leftist friends in the Congress who had wanted the emergency in as early as January 1975 She had stopped trusting them She found an ally in her son who confirmed her own feelings by warning her time and again ' Ultimately they will throw you out he would say ' and you don t realize that Ironically if Indira Gandhi s motivations had been at all ideological she would have had Narayan on her side because that was how he felt as well

A time may come wrote JP from prison when having squeezed the juice out of Mrs Gandhi the Russians through the CPI and their Trojan horses within the Congress will dump her on the garbage heap of history [78]

JP is a professional and scientific anti communist observes Shashi Bhushan So is Sanjay, the way he has operated

But as all through Chandra Shekhar s is the view I would

[78]Jayaprakash Narayan *Prison Diary* Bombay Popular Prakashan p 3

go along with he is rational, cool, and analytical He is not an extremist to get carried away by his support for a person or by his hostility towards any issue

"They appear to be leftists with some kind of an idea about a Left take over, he said about the group Mrs Gandhi seemed to fear 'I don t know what kind of Marxism they understand because according to Marx you have to prepare the masses first' Chandra Shekhar shrugged them off as vague votaries of a romantic revolution

Indira Gandhi was justified in thinking that there were short term and long term moves from all directions, which had gained ascendancy at that point to hound her out The only thing is that if she had resigned she would have saved herself the ignominy of being hounded out by the force she had lived on—the people

There was not much preparation for the emergency observes R K Dhawan 'Ministers members of parliament groups and individuals visited the PM s house as usual on 23 and 24 June and passed general comments on the situation Madame they said there is too much chaos Something should be done ' On the 24th Dev Kanta Barooah and Siddhartha Ray expressed themselves in categorical terms about the need for firm action That afternoon on the same day came the supreme court judgement on Mrs Gandhi s appeal for an absolute stay

The Vocations Judge Mr V R Krishna Iyer s[79] hyperbolic turns of phrase could not cover the starkness of his conclusion The halls of justice must be informed to some extent by the great verity that the broad sweep of human history is guided by sociological forces beyond the ken of the noisy hour or the quirk of legal nicety Life is larger than the law said His Lordship and then pronounced Mrs Gandhi half guilty She could stay on as prime minister and exercise her functions in that capacity

[79]V R Krishna Iyer was born in 1915 in Kerala He did his law from Madras University and was elected member of the Madras legislative assembly in 1952 on the CPI ticket In 1957 he was elected to the Kerala assembly and later became minister of law home social welfare and prisons in the com munist government In 1959 when the communists had to resign he began his practice in the Kerala high court He became a judge in 1968 member of the law commission in 1971 and judge of the supreme court in 1973

in parliament as long as she remained prime minister or minister during the pendency of her appeal in the supreme court against the judgement of the Allahabad high court As a member of the Lok Sabha, however, Indira Gandhi had lost her right to vote, to participate in the proceedings of the house, or even to draw her remuneration

There was once again a stunned hush at the prime minister's house The leaders went grim faced and silent, filed into Mrs Gandhi s room like a line of mourners but came out smiling The people outside brightened when she came and spoke to them There was no suspense as on 12 June We have lost the battle but we have won the war,' Barooah had said then and on the 18th, at the meeting of the Congress parliamentary party he had come out with his famous statement 'India is Indira, Indira is India [80] Chavan had not lagged far behind, though his phrase did not catch on as much 'What happens to her happens to India and what happens to India happens to her,' he said The decision that she should remain prime minister even if she got a conditional stay was made by her senior colleagues as early as 15 June They had even taken into account the op position threats to create a deadlock in parliament and decided that parliament could be called into session after the supreme court s final verdict which was not expected to take more than six weeks

By the 25th, all the moves against her in the Congress behind its obvious unctuous face had proved infructuous The opposition was jubilant about Justice Iyer s verdict The joint meeting of the executives of the opposition parties stated bitingly Mrs Gandhi s credibility stands destroyed Her membership of the Lok Sabha is restricted Her right to vote is suspended What kind of a prime minister can she be? The Communist Party of India on the other hand came out with a strong plea that ' she should not surrender to the blackmail of Right reac tion—and remain prime minister

If the opposition was on the warpath there were within the Congress too rumblings of criticism about the way the rallies

[80] "We were discussing alliteration in literature one day" recalls Unni krishnan and Barooah who has this feel for words suddenly hit upon this phrase That s how it happened He thought he would use it at the appropriate time

were being organized, of the use of state transport and of the vulgar ways in which crowds were displayed I was not so close to her I had just about joined the Congress said Tarkeshwari Sinha I thought I should still be a back bencher I had been a known opponent of Mrs Gandhi But even I had the courage to say about all those women doing *bhangra* and all outside 'This is so silly I said to her You re precious to us it s up to your secretariat to see that nothing undignified hould happen I thought it would be too cheeky to say much more she remarked But the fact was that Indira Gandhi was not only enjoying these rallies she admired the way her son had helped in organizing them She thought the people s will so obviously expressed in her favour would teach a lesson or two to those who were opposing her Certainly if she herself had been sensitive to the style of these public demonstrations she would never have acted as swiftly and ruthlessly as she did in the matter of Nirmal Kumar Mukherjee[31] her home secretary

Dhawan her aide says that the word emergency had not emerged as such even by the morning of 25 June But the way N K Mukherjee was relieved of his vital charge and shifted to the ministry of tourism and civil aviation on 22 June itself suggests that serious steps had been contemplated very early Sanjay was very much in the picture and the style of punishment exercised during the emergency was already being initiated with regard to the highest official authorities The immediate provocation was a call by Home Minister Brahmananda Reddy to the home secretary saying that the transport provided by the New Delhi municipal committee and the Delhi state transport corporation for taking people to the roundabout near Safdarjang Road to stage rallies in support of the PM was attracting adverse attention almost to the point of becoming scandalous The home secretary should take steps to have this stopped suggested Reddy

Mukherjee immediately called a meeting of the five top officers of the home ministry who generally deal with such matters—

[31]Nirmal Kumar Mukherjee is fifty s x in the Punjab cadre of the Indian civil service He came to the Centre as development commissioner of small scale industries in 1963 and became joint secretary of the ministry of home affairs in 1964 He was chief secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir government in 1971 and home secretary f om 1973 to D-day 1975 A tall soft spoken man with an interest in music and the arts he is now cabinet secretary

dditional Secretary T C A Srinivasvardhan,[83] CBI Chief Anant
yaram Intelligence Bureau Director D Sen, and special
cretary of the ministry of home affairs—former director general
the BSF K F Rustomji Mukherjee placed the instructions of
e home minister before the meeting for their opinion Almost
l agreed that the process of arranging the demonstrations was
ndeed scandalous but that this was a matter entirely within the
risdiction of the Delhi administration and that it should best
e dealt with by Lieutenant Governor Kishan Chand The only
erson who was not categorical about this was Sen who kept
umming and hawing

There is an extremely interesting sidelight to this situation
Home Minister Reddy had already been pushed into the back
round by Om Mehta his minister of state in the exercise of
nfluence with the prime minister—or Sanjay Gandhi Both
Mukherjee and Rustomji expressed the feeling that if the
nstructions of the home minister were conveyed to the lieutenant
governor *he would undoubtedly not carry them out* The meeting then
arrived at a consensus which suggested this view be conveyed to
he home minister and that the proper course for him would be to
ell Om Mehta the minister of state for home affairs to speak to
the lieutenant governor because they felt that if the latter could
be persuaded to point out that the use of these vehicles was to the
disadvantage of the government and the prime minister Kishan
Chand would listen This was accordingly conveyed to the home
minister Om Mehta did speak to the lieutenant governor and the
use of the vehicles was discontinued

At this point nobody except the home minister and the five
officials of his ministry knew anything about this meeting having
taken place Yet each detail of the discussions and who said what
was conveyed to the prime minister as well as to Sanjay Gandhi

[83]T C.A Srinivasvardhan fifty four spent almost twelve years in the union ministry of home affairs except for a brief stint in the home state of Madhya Pradesh as secretary to the government. He was deputy secretary joint secretary and additional secretary in the home ministry at the desk of Centre state relations till Mrs Gandhi had his services reverted back to Madhya Pradesh and he became chairman of the board of revenue Gwalior He came back to the Centre as home secretary soon after the Janata came into power while N K. Mukherjee took the post he was expected to fill earlier as cabinet secretary

Srinivasvardhan was tipped at the time to be home secretary after Mukherjee who was expected to become cabinet secretary being the seniormost ICS officer after B D Pande who was due to retire D Sen did not get on well with either of them, and felt, probably, that his own days as the IB boss would be numbered after they took over It was speculated that he probably thought it best to ensure his own position by currying favour with Sanjay and the prime minister

Apparently there were the same motivations which made Lieutenant Governor Kishan Chand complain to both about his helplessness in the matter of dealing with the *dharnas* outside Rashtrapati Bhavan What can I do the home secretary doesn t listen! he is reported to have exclaimed Mukherjee says what s the use of removing these people there are crowds gathering even outside the PM s house all the time He says they (the opposition) won t be there for long and also the president is not even here

The lieutenant governor did not have to consult the home ministry to remove those participating in the *dharnas* It was in his jurisdiction But it was his practice to either consult them or keep them informed of the actions being contemplated against prominent leaders of the opposition Whether the lieutenant governor talked to the home secretary or not it seems he certainly informed Sanjay Gandhi in the evening that day that the home secretary was dragging his feet in the matter or was averse to taking any action Overnight, on the 21st S L Khurana the chief secretary of Rajasthan was called to Delhi On the 22nd he was appointed home secretary, N K Mukherjee was sent off to the tourism ministry and Srinivasvardhan was back to his home cadre of Madhya Pradesh shortly after as chairman of the board of revenue in Gwalior

At 11 am on the 25th morning when Siddhartha Ray saw the prime minister, she showed him a sheaf of reports about the situation in the country In her assessment said Ray something had to be done

He came away, but went back at 4 pm with a lot of books and the Constitution of India That s when they talked about the emergency *Does the law permit it?* she asked Ray ' *Yes* he replied ' It does permit a second emergency [83] They both

[83]An emergency to deal with possible external threat was already in force in the country since 1962

went to the president, who had also seen a number of reports He agreed within fifteen minutes Back at the PM s house, 'only P N Dhar and the home secretary were there," according to Dhawan. The letter had to be drafted to be sent to the president, suggesting the promulgation of emergency Two lines would be drafted and then Mrs Gandhi would read them out 'Why it was taking so long was that every five minutes Sanjay would come in from another room and say, 'Mummy come for a minute, and she would go,' recalled Ray Sanjay was busy ringing up chief ministers who happened to be in Delhi, or those in the state capitals and would call his mother each time to talk to them

By 6 30 that evening the phones were ringing hectically in select homes or offices of some of the northern states The pattern was almost identical The telephone would ring at the residence of the chief secretary the home secretary, and the inspector general of police—"The chief minister wants you to attend an urgent meeting' In the office of the chief minister there would be an air of secrecy The emergency is being announced in the country and everybody in the opposition has to be rounded up Wireless messages should be set to the DIGs in every division to round up the members of the RSS and the hard core of the Jan Sangh The press should not get to know Censorship should be imposed They should be prevented from publishing any news relating to this round up

'Why is this happening sir? an officer would ask

Because a situation has emerged where all institutions of government are threatened and widespread rebellion is likely to take place If people are not arrested we'll not be able to control the situation Every collector and SP in the districts should be asked to remain in his station and not proceed anywhere on leave

Wireless messages were sent out immediately to every district in India Police went to the various newspaper presses and in some cases destroyed the galleys of stories filed in so that there could be no papers in the morning The editors started ringing up Except the top three or four officers neither the police nor the administration knew what was going on None of those involved either in the districts or in the state capitals slept that night

At the PM s house, the draft to be sent to the president was

finally ready It was then signed by Home Minister Brahmananda Reddy The emergency[84] came into force at 11 20 when the president signed his consent

The members of the union cabinet did not know Chavan, for intance worked till late that night He read the speeches, which were coming on the ticker, of JP and the others at the mammoth opposition rally at the Ram Lila grounds that evening He did not know exactly what JP had said but it looked bad He felt uneasy At 4 30 in the morning, there was a call An unfamiliar voice asked May I speak to Mr Chavan? '

Chavan here

I just wanted to see if you were there, said the voice and put the phone down

Chavan could not sleep after that At 5 am there was a call from the home secretary saying that there would be a cabinet meeting at 6 am Soon after there was another call this time from a friend, to say that JP had been arrested Within minutes came another about Morarji Then about Chandra Shekhar At 6 when Chavan reached the PM s house he knew about the arrests—but no more

Mrs Gandhi was naturally grave as she looked at the ministers of her government who had been rushed out of their beds at that unlikely hour She had not trusted them enough to have consulted them on the step she had taken It would have been too risky in case one of them raised an objection She took about ten or *fifteen minutes to explain why she had already had the emergency* imposed in the country Swaran Singh turned to the home secretary not to her and asked mildly whether it could not have been avoided Nobody else spoke There was a stillness in their hearts As Chavan gazed at the woman who had led them through the conflicts and vicissitudes of the times with whom they had had their cla hes but to whom they had aLo given their loyalty he felt as if he had been plunged suddenly into an endless tunnel of darkness

[84]Emergency was declared under article 352 of the Constitution If the pres dent is satisfied that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India thereof is threatened whether by war or external aggression or internal disturbance he may by proclamation make a declaration to that effect Clause 3 reads that such an emergency may be made before the actual occurrence of war or any such aggression or disturbance if the president is satisfied that there is imminent danger thereof

They did not know what had been going on in the PM s house the evening before—who had been there, how the decision was taken But in the midst of that hectic activity Sanjay s behaviour had given a hint to those who were present of the shape of things to come He had wanted to instruct the chief ministers at least of the northern states he knew well to lock up the high courts and cut off the electricity in all newspaper offices Ray says he protested seriously to him there was an altercation and Sanjay began shouting You don t know how to run the country

if you are backed by all but you just have to hang around Work is no criterion "

'It is very difficult to keep a check on that " remarked Mrs Gandhi

I ve nothing to contribute there, I d like to do some work entrusted to me here, C P N ended up saying

Mrs Gandhi looked at him quietly

"You meet Sanjay tomorrow, she said

' The beginning of the decline of the organizational base of the Congress was in 1969 when Radha Raman was made ad hoc president of the Delhi Pradesh Congress committee, said Deep Chand Sharma, proud and fifty six, an organizational man, former deputy leader of the Congress opposition in the Delhi corporation and an elected member of the AICC for almost three decades Thakur Hukam Singh was elected but I feel he was removed on the advice of the PM because he was Chaudhry Brahm Prakash s man With 1969 came the real test Even people who were with her were suspect "

Originally the Delhi Pradesh Congress committee had thirty elected members By 1973 this number had grown to forty five Two years later there were 240 members, all nominated! After the emergency H K L Bhagat,[4] who was ad hoc president, became minister of state for works and housing and another president was selected—Amar Nath Chawla [5]

[4]H K L Bhagat is a short dynamic politician born in 1921 in the historic village of Harappa in Pakistan He came to Delhi after the partition and graduated from law to politics He made Delhi not Punjab his base and was one of the few Punjabis who came to be accepted as a *Delhiwalla* He became chief parliamentary secretary in the Delhi government when he was less than thirty and never looked back—PCC president then member of parliament finally chairman of the programme implementation committee and then union minister of state for works and housing Congress was and remains the passion

[5]A.N Chawla sixty three was born in Burma and went to University College in Rangoon He had unbroken involvement with the Congress earning his parliamentary seat via the organizational ladder He lost on the supreme court ruling that expenses incurred in an election by a political party or *friends of a candidate should be added to his own expense* thereby violating the limit set on election expenses in his own case In 1974 the *Representation of the People s Act* was made effective retrospectively—thereby applying to Mrs Gandhi s own case pending at the time

I was neither keen to become a member of an ad hoc com mittee, nor was I angling for a seat in parliament, but I wrote two notes to the PM about this whole business of not having organizational elections I got no reply,' said Sharma

Then, within a month and a half, he learnt of what he calls a smear campaign against him for his "non cooperation ' Sharma thought of clearing his position "Left alone, ' he said, she is the most dynamic person in the country" But he was told that she was not handling Delhi affairs

'Who then? ' he had asked

Meet Sanjay,' he was told

In September 1975 I was deputed to visit some districts of Rajasthan and UP to see how the implementation of the twenty point programme was going on I came back and wrote in a report for the PM that vested interests were not allowing the distribution of land to landless labourers, and that there was no alternate source provided for villagers to get loans after giving them debt relief It was delivered by hand at the PM s house but there was no reply," said fifty six year old Shiv Charan Gupta,[6] an expe rienced Congressman from Delhi with a prestigious hold in the organization

A fortnight later a meeting of chief ministers was called to dis cuss the setting up of rural banks and the distribution of land to landless labourers But if this gave him some moral satisfaction, it did not boost his morale for Gupta could only surmise that his letter may have been a contributory reason After the exit of P V Narasimha Rao[7] as general secretary of the Congress,

[6]Shiv Charan Gupta again a Delhi stalwart with a strong organizational base. He is a soft looking grey haired fifty five, who has been Congress parlia mentary secretary in 1952 deputy minister in 1952-53 and leader of the opposi tion in the metropolitan council in Delhi in 1967 72 He was the AICC repre sentative to Goa in the assembly elections He left the Congress with Jagjivan Ram on 2 February 1977 because he thought that the functioning of the party was not contributing any more to a sense of self respect.

[7]P V Narasimha Rao fifty six born in Karimnagar (Andhra) is a rare breed in politics he is a distinguished writer and an equally successful politician He became minister under Sanjeeva Reddy in Andhra Pradesh in 1962 and was again minister with Brahmananda Reddy in 1964 and assumed charge himself as chief minister from 1971 to 1973 His appointment as general secretary of the Congress Party gave a terrific boost to the post but he was too independent to last out in the circumstances

the practice of getting these reports had been discontinued Invitations for Congressmen kept coming in from various states but no facilities were extended by the All India Congress committee Either they did not find the right' people to review the programmes or there was some hitch at the chief ministerial level to make finances available for these trips However, there was no idea till then to associate youth workers at the grass roots level

Then I wrote innumerable letters about slum clearance' says Gupta There was only one acknowledgement from S Haider of the prime minister s secretariat Even the ministry concerned seemed to have no time to consider the matter I asked the PM to give me some time Nothing happened Then I went to the ministry—nothing Finally, when I understood that he was looking after it, I went to Sanjay Gandhi

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal O P Mehra was *Chef de Mission* leading the Indian contingent participating in the Montreal games *in July 1976 Before the Indian hockey stars left for* Montreal a month earlier, the air marshal presented the team to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi After their meeting with her it was suggested that they meet Sanjay Gandhi too

'Certainly, complied the air marshal

A retired chief of the naval staff asked to meet the prime minister to discuss with her the possibility of being given another assignment Instead, he got an appointment with Sanjay Gandhi

We do not have anything for you at present' said the young man to the admiral But why don t you drop in occasionally whenever you come to Delhi? We might have something later

It might be a good idea if you keep in touch with him, confided an aide to the admiral

I met Sanjay first with Indiraji when Narain Dutt Tiwari was being talked about as being the next chief minister of UP after Bahuguna resigned' said Chandrajit Yadav

'What do you think of Tiwari as chief minister and Sheela

Kaul as president of the PCC? asked the PM

There are three points against Sheelaji" said Yadav 'She s a Brahmin, she s your aunt—and that ll be held against her—and she does not know enough people '

'Tiwari?'

He was a good minister, but he is not a leader He s quite vague We have functioned together in the assembly We were both in the opposition, but I d always argued on the basis of some ideas—he never did

'No no he ll be good interrupted Sanjay

The PM agreed with Yadav When the decisions were announced Sheela Kaul had not been made the president, but Tiwari was in as chief minister

Did you realize the level at which Sanjay was operating by then and to what extent? I asked Yadav

Of course he replied we all knew The chief ministers used to come and tell each one of us after meeting him what he had said and all

At what point would you say there was a distinct swing towards the Right? I asked Radha Raman

With the judgement. There was nothing like that before It was her reaction to the fear she had developed of those she had inducted who had been card holders She came in with their help in 1969 Kept UP with their help Bihar couldn t stand without the communists, and in Kerala there was a coalition

Sanjay Gandhi came in with his own ideas The boy was not experienced, he had no politics He was a private sector owner, incensed by his own experience who came out strongly with his opinions At home hearing the talk and the arguments all the time she could have been influenced she is no diehard she is mouldable

'Do you think she used him as a sounding board?

' Not directly But I can say she was not unhappy

' Why did you a senior Congressman make a special effort to give him prominence by inviting him to address the DPCC members and Delhi politicians?

The boy was good He had good ideas I liked his five points Any young man, I thought who belongs to the Nehru family,

must be given his due So I brought him What he said was right there should be no slogans he said and performance should be emphasized but his style was too *teekha* (abrasive) *baat gale se guzarti nahin thee* (the words were so hard one couldn t digest them) "

' Do you think he intended to create a power base of his own?

"He didn t do anything on policy without consulting his mother When the communists encouraged strikes, she would say 'they always make use of us That is the kind of thing that gave him the *sheh* (impetus) in the first place It was Sanjay who rang up Zail Singh[8] and other CMs to start the anti communist wave

Many members of parliament began to realize, as Sanjay grew more powerful, that Indira Gandhi was deliberately aiming to restore an ideological balance Because she had been associated with a leftist stand Sanjay s views could encourage the capitalist countries to think that Indira might readjust her priorities They thought she was throwing out hints in all directions on the pre sumption that what Sanjay and his set said would not offend the leftists at the same time it would give hope to the rightists

Many of us felt we would have to make a choice between her and Sanjay, that we would be compelled to make a choice as in 1969 remarked Margaret Alva[9] the vivacious young member of the Rajya Sabha But we thought we should keep our views quiet, otherwise we would be marked anti Sanjay How could

[8]Born poor in a carpenter s family in 1916 Zail Singh had the drive and the guts to reach the very top as chief minister of Punjab in 1972 He is a straight backed fairly well built Sikh with a cool manner which can become unctuous enough when the occasion demands He was one of the three or four chief ministers who were always in orbit around the sun the call of Delhi remained loud and clear

[9]Margaret Alva is only thirty five perhaps one of the youngest members in the present parliament A gold medal winner in law from Mangalore (Karna taka) Margaret had political antecedants in Delhi with Violet Alva her late energetic mother in law a leader in political circles and Joachim Alva her father in law

With this background Margaret Alva took an active interest in the question of the constitutional amendments while her general alertness led to an involvement in both party and parliamentary work She is always bubbl ng with life

he have gained that stature without her? That was the conflict in my mind"

Margaret Alva was blindly devoted," as she described it, to Indira Gandhi She felt it was Indira who had presented a challenge to the younger generation by taking an anti establishment stand in 1969 It was Indira who had stood up to the old coterie carried the rank and file along with her progressive policies, and come to represent a new spirit in the Congress which was missing until then It was this that had made Alva join the Congress at the time She came to Delhi in 1976 'at the height of the challenge to the Congress, as she says, and she felt that she owed her politics to Mrs Gandhi directly, like the rest of the younger lot Mrs Gandhi was attractive young and gave the feeling to everybody that if you could somehow get to her and win her confidence things were bound to happen, said Alva

By July 1976, Margaret Alva did not know where to turn She told Om Mehta[10] once, 'At least tell us, guide us What are we supposed to do? Fight back? ' But there was no guidance from the party, or from the prime minister Some of the chief ministers from the south began going to her in despair

' You re close to Delhi they said You should know Do we have to pay homage to Sanjay to keep the PM pleased?

Why Sanjay?

What were the special qualifications of this younger son of the prime minister, born on 14 December 1946 to enable him to counter a Left take over which, evidently Mrs Gandhi feared would happen?

He was a Doon School Columbus product a some time Rolls Royce apprentice in London utterly unacademic, totally non intellectual, and in the public mind a reckless gadfly with a

[10]Om Mehta does not look anything like the tyrant of the emergency his reputation during the period At fifty he carries his figure in a loose and flabby way He has made his impact very strongly on parliamentary affairs where his unruffled manner soothes tempers and persuades people and paved the way for the successful acceptance of any bill

Mehta was born in Kishtwar (Jammu) and concentrated on Kashmir politics for a while He was elected to the Rajya Sabha for his initiation into central politics in 1964 and as minister in the government later He was minister of state for home affairs till the Congress government fell in March this year

penchant for girls and a passion for cars Over the years all kinds of stories came to be associated with him in Delhi There were shady tales of fast living and women there were hints of surreptitious assignations, secret jaunts to Lucknow London or anywhere stories of remorseful girls and angry brothers, a car allegedly stolen here for a lark and a decadent scene there for kicks If he was supposed to have been seen drunk in five starred hotels he was also seen at the *adda* (favourite gathering place) which was the shop of his mechanic friend Arjun Das [11] chatting with truck drivers and motor mechanics—a crude world of rough and ready men with conventionally golden hearts and as it proved later even more golden ambitions

I met Sanjay in 1971 said thirty-eight year old Raj Kaushik,[12] known as one of Sanjay s right hand men, a member of the programme implementation committee set up during the emergency and promoter of *Geeton Bhari Shaam* a controversial film stars extravaganza organized to collect funds Tillu (K S Makhan honorary inspector and a member of the Delhi Flying Club) took me to see him He was working in a garage in Gulabi Bagh He was a young slim beautiful boy and I felt so ashamed Here was a man from such a family, I thought and he doesn t seem to have any reservations about working like this in these surroundings while we waste so much time I wanted him to become the patron of the Vidhushak Sangh, my social work organization He agreed When the mid term poll was announced I went to the PM s house. Ours was a non party organization, but Indiraji's *Garibi Hatao* programme inspired us greatly and we wanted to help We brought Sanjay to Kamala Nagar He began

[11]Arjun Das was born in Lahore in 1931 He was only fifteen when he joined the Congress in 1954 He had a motorcycle repair shop in Lakshmibai Nagar and his graduation into becoming a mechanic brought him in touch with Sanjay Gandhi. That made his fortune He became member of the metropolitan council in 1972 He is short squat and dark, and in public dealings, loud and crude

[12]Raj Kaushik was born on 12 April 1939 in Delhi Participated in national movements during his student life Founded Vidhushak Sangh a national cultural and social society to publicise the policies of Indira Gandhi for the benefit of the common people Organizes *kavi sammelans* in Subzi Mandi on the eve of Independence day to promote Hindi literature with the help of poets of national fame Distributes free textbooks, medicines and clothes among students belonging to the weaker sections of society Is special Congress delegate from Sadar district and convenor of the Nehru Brigade Member PIC.

to give speeches There was never such a crowd before in Kamala Nagar!

Ironically, Sanjay also worked for Shashi Bhushan in the latter s constituency in 1971 Shashi belonged to the leftist group which Sanjay really came to hate later This however, was at the other end of town, in South Delhi Sanjay would sit in a ram shackle cafe across the women's Lady Shri Ram College cracking risque jokes with his cronies and throwing out comments after the girls with such impunity that Shashi Bhushan s publicity manager whom he called Uncle ' was constrained to rebuke him He was no gangling teenager then He was twenty five years old managing director of Maruti Limited proud owner of an enterprise to make a people s car his childhood dream come true

But the point is did Sanjay pursue scandal or did scandal pursue him?

To begin with, Maruti literally begged controversy It was sanctioned by a mother who felt that she could not deny her son his valid right to business It had been conceived on a large scale, with the participation of some of the major industrialists of India If big business was involved so closely with a project that belonged to the prime minister's son, argued the leftists how could she retain her option to take action if necessary against big monopoly houses? The issue of nepotism, however was a topic apart—why did Haryana Chief Minister Bansi Lal for instance get him the land and how did he get it? Why did he get the letter of indent when there was the question of whether he could garner enough technical talent to produce the car at all? Or was Maruti to be the handmade toy of a nation s spoilt darling?

' It was Feroze *Bhai* s'[13] obsession that his sons must become technicians emphasized Tarkeshwari Sinha, who remembered the times when Nehru was prime minister She used to see Sanjay s

[13]It would not have been unnecessary to refer to Feroze Gandhi as Indira Gandhi s husband had he lived even five years more than when he d d He died in 1960 at the age of forty eight He was on his way to becoming such an effective force in parliament that there was always excitement when he rose to speak His gaiety and light heartedness covered a capacity for such solid hard work that his exposures in parl ament of the nefarious activities of business empires became irreputable and led to the resignation of ministers and senior bureaucrats The Feroze Corner in the central hall of parliament was always the centre of stimulating di cussion wit and repartee

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[12]Raj Kaushik was born on 12 April 1939 in Delhi Participated in national movements during his student life Founded Vidhushak Sangh a national cultu ral and social society to publicize the policies of Indira Gandhi for the benefit of the common people Organizes kavi sammelans in Subzi Mandi on the eve of independence day to promote Hindi literature with the help of poets of national fame Distributes free textbooks medicines and clothes among students belong ing to the weaker sections of society Is special Congress delegate from Sadar district and convenor of the Nehru Brigade Member PIC

to give speeches There was never such a crowd before in Kamala Nagar! '

Ironically, Sanjay also worked for Shashi Bhushan in the latter's constituency in 1971 Shashi belonged to the leftist group which Sanjay really came to hate later This, however was at the other end of town, in South Delhi Sanjay would sit in a ram shackle cafe across the women's Lady Shri Ram College, cracking risque jokes with his cronies and throwing out comments after the girls with such impunity that Shashi Bhushan s publicity manager, whom he called Uncle " was constrained to rebuke him. He was no gangling teenager then He was twenty five years old managing director of Maruti Limited proud owner of an enterprise to make a people's car, his childhood dream come true

But the point is did Sanjay pursue scandal or did scandal pursue him?

To begin with, Maruti literally begged controversy It was sanctioned by a mother who felt that she could not deny her son his valid right to business It had been conceived on a large scale, with the participation of some of the major industrialists of India If big business was involved so closely with a project that belonged to the prime minister s son argued the leftists, how could she retain her option to take action, if necessary against big monopoly houses? The issue of nepotism, however, was a topic apart—why did Haryana Chief Minister Bansi Lal for instance, get him the land, and how did he get it? Why did he get the letter of indent when there was the question of whether he could garner enough technical talent to produce the car at all? Or was Maruti to be the handmade toy of a nation s spoilt darling?

It was Feroze *Bhai* s[13] obsession that his sons must become technicians ' emphasized Tarkeshwari Sinha, who remembered the times when Nehru was prime minister She used to see Sanjay's

[13]It would not have been unnecessary to refer to Feroze Gandhi as Indira Gandhi s husband had he lived even five years more than when he did He died in 1960 at the age of forty-eight He was on his way to becoming such an effective force in parliament that there was always excitement when he rose to speak His gaiety and light heartedness covered a capacity for such solid hard work that his exposures in parliament of the nefarious activities of business empires became irreputable and led to the resignation of ministers and senior bureaucrats The Feroze Corner in the central hall of parliament was always the centre of stimulating discussion wit and repartee

father playing with his two sons at their house on Queen Victoria Road (now Dr Rajendra Prasad Road) which was allotted to him as a member of parliament, and which he used during the day and sometimes even to stay at away from Teen Murti House where they all lived together "As a mother myself I can understand Indiraji s attitude She knew Sanjay had only one preoccupation I ve never given him enough time ' she must have felt Should I deny him the only thing he wants? Maruti has been discussed since 1968 Each time she s had to answer questions in parliament she has called for reports from the finance and other ministries No departmental report conveyed anything was wrong

In 1972 a sample of the Maruti car (displayed without its engine) had drawn crowds to the Haryana state pavilion at the 1972 Asia trade fair But by December 1973 the car industry was in doldrums because of the Arab oil price hike, and its resul tant impact on the cost of petrol The demand for cars slumped and Maruti which had not got anywhere near the assembly line also found itself at a dead end There was only one model to be seen and that was at brewery tycoon Mohan Meakins show room The model was with their director—the only Maruti on the road though most of the time the engine got too heated or the gears broke

The subject was engaging enough I thought for an article in my own magazine *Surge*, now *Surge International* I was also curious I thought it would be a good idea to gauge for myself the exact potential of Maruti and its maker I fixed an appointment with Sanjay My cousin Asha Narang who takes good photo graphs K C Sonrexa another photographer Sudarshan Seth a friend and I went off to the Maruti factory on 5 May

The first thing Sanjay did was to show us how the car ran Seth and Sonrexa decided to go to the factory Asha sat at the back in a white Maruti I sat in front and Sanjay took the wheel Apparently he had a special testing run on the sides and around the main building He drove at break neck speed on the road across a country patch and over bushes ditches and boulders The speedometer showed 100 kilometres an hour He sat impas sively while I terrified held on with a determined air So did Asha Maruti hugged the ground with an equally determined grasp but made a lot of noise That can t be helped said

Sanjay, otherwise the cost will go up He had originally planned to price the car at Rs 13,000 It could not be less than Rs 25 000 now, he said, in view of the falling market and the rising cost of materials He proposed to have fifty cars out every day by December 1975, but the ultimate aim was to produce 200 a day He had a scheme for ancillary industries to be set up nearby including a carburettor making unit The engine was indigenous he said but they were getting whatever carburettors were avail able, imported or local, from the Indian market

In the factory inside, five cars were standing ready and polished, fifteen were being assembled The engine was being cast by hand and huge machines were standing idle, for there was no dye for the body I m working on getting that, said Sanjay, "it ll take some time' In the meantime everything was being done by hand ' Custom made,' remarked my friend Sudarshan sarcastically when we came back But diversification had been allowed to the car industry because of the slump, and so road rollers and bus bodies were also being made with the Maruti stamp

Sanjay had seemed an earnest enough young man He was polite and knew his subject But he had to make that car I thought if he wanted to establish his credibility Shortly after, there appeared a major illustrated article on Maruti in a leading Indian weekly I just dropped the idea of doing mine I did feel however that a publicity build up was being organized though it seemed confined to explaining the absence of Maruti on the road

By May 1975 Maruti Ltd had complex money yielding arrangements with Maruti Technical Services Pvt Ltd, a consul tancy body and Maruti Heavy Vehicles Pvt Ltd for manufacturing trucks and road rollers A business empire was in the offing and money apparently was the theme—though it hadn t looked like it in that sprawling complex at Gurgaon eighteen miles from Delhi Sanjay would go meticulously to the factory at 8 am and return only in the evenings

But there was no car

There were questions in parliament however and there was increasing tension in the inner conclaves of the party There were clashes with Mrs Gandhi and public talk about the involvement of members of the family in Sanjay s game of proliferating finance For the first time in her political career the shadow of

Patna As soon as she was back she was beseiged by the communists and the leftists within the Congress for clarification There was an absolute furore By 8 45 that night, on the orders of P N Dhar,[15] the prime minister's principal secretary the interview was withdrawn from the papers Early next morning I was asked politely, but implacably not to release my magazine At midnight there was a frantic trunk call from Calcutta Siddhartha Shankar Ray rang Dhawan to have the paragraph on the CPI deleted Dhawan rang Shukla, which set off a chain of events ultimately leading to the appearance of a contradiction in the papers the next day by Sanjay Gandhi He had to issue a statement which read like a forced apology

"I did not mean to make such a sweeping statement about an entire party" it said Obviously in some parties like the Swatantra, the Jan Sangh and the BLD there are far more wealthy people and there is also more corruption ' He was not prepared to deny his convictions totally, because he added I felt angry because I have heard that some individuals who call themselves communist Marxists and pose as being superior are in fact rich and also far from honest I do not agree with the communists but I must admit that their workers are dedicated to their cause and willing to sacrifice for it They may take advantage of a situation but the CPI has supported and worked wholeheartedly for progressive policies specially those affecting the poor people

"Although they were maligned and abused they fought against the Grand Alliance Janata Morcha and such other combinations because they knew that these were harming the country I should also like to make it clear that about other matters also, anything I said was my personal view "[16]

It must have made him squirm to have been impelled to say this

That very afternoon I went to see him He looked livid

' The interview has gone in most of the *dak* (late) editions of

[15]Prithvi Nath Dhar fifty-eight took over from P N Haksar as the prime minister s principal private secretary in 1971 A professorial background with the Institute of Economic Growth contributed to a much less flamboyant functioning than that of Haksar the capacity to use power was also much less In fact, with Dhar the post itself seemed to recede into a serviceable but pale existence Only the job invoked awe not the functioning

[16]*Indian Express* 29 August 1975

the national dailies, it's appeared all over the world, what's the point in not letting the magazine appear?' I asked

He did not say sorry I don't think he was particularly bothered about us suffering a financial loss by not releasing the magazine for sale—apart from the loss of face He was too upset about his own

'It just can t be done," said he

'Isn't there anyone else I can ask? It's so illogical"

He looked uncomfortable 'Why don't you try Barooah and the lot? They are the ones," he muttered with suppressed fury

The lines seemed clearly drawn within the Congress Sanjay's views, now aired in public, were sharply critical and antagonistic to government policy The leftists were angrily saying that he could, himself, be sentenced under MISA for violating the new regulations of censorship and conduct under the emergency That might have frightened Mrs Gandhi into making him issue the palliative

But the reaction was more intense than she had anticipated If it had been only the Communist Party of India which created the storm of protest, she might not have yielded But they were members of her own party, ready to condemn her for breach of faith The emergency had not been in existence long enough to have sapped the energy of dissent, nor was Mrs Gandhi fully prepared for a showdown

So bitter, in fact, was the impact on the ideologues of the Left, that Sanjay was branded an agent, instrument or stooge of American intelligence according to the degree of anger felt by the accuser I was continuously chastized by one group "for conspiring to project him on the political scene by having provided him a forum," and praised simultaneously, by another for having revealed Sanjay's actual views and giving some hope of a way out from the murky gloom of socialism, to capitalist freedom in the person of the prime minister's own son' I was offered a hundred to 500 rupees for a single issue of *Surge* by emissaries of big businessmen from Bombay and Calcutta

There was no question of selling the magazine like that of course but it made me laugh because they said they read the whole interview in the papers but had to see the original to believe their eyes I was also told that some businessmen had framed newspaper cuttings of the interview, while others had

printed pamphlets of it for circulation in the industry

These are just the sidelights of an issue which had deeper implications and which could not be explained away as the accidental outpourings of a truant young politico

The vital question was did Mrs Gandhi know the views which Sanjay was going to express on economic policy?

Yes She did

To begin with discussions at the dining table at meal times were frank and provocative enough for the family to know each other s views Their pattern of life was not such as one might find in traditional joint families where a brother mav never be on such terms with his sister as to know how she really felt about men and matters, or a father be necessarily aware of all his son s activities The Gandhis is a modern version of a joint family in which the head of the household in this case a mother, is not an awe-inspiring figure who restricts the free flow of conversation banter argument and even clashes This remained so even when she became a figure of fear for the rest of the Congress leadership and the country

Besides there was Sanjav Gandhi's temperament The back ground of his childhood and his later development, suggest a propensity for inventive mischief, daring and opinionated behaviour Sanjay has also the habit of veering sharply into a discussion with aggressive comment Mrs Gandhi herself gives the example of an occasion when a socialite chided her for not having enough time for her children because of her political involvements Sanjay then little, was standing nearby Springing to her defence, he retorted angrily to the lady 'But you spend all your time playing bridge your own son complains to me' An old servant, who used to see Pandit Nehru take time off to play with his grandsons every evening at Teen Murti House, says that Sanjay was always the more *chanchal* (sprightly) of the two He scotched all rumours about Sanjay s drinking habits though—at least in Teen Murti House Years later when they had both grown up and the same servant carried around the drinks to serve guests Sanjay would say, when the tray came to him '*Yeh to bare bhai ko dikhao* (This had better go to my elder brother, not me) '

If you told Rajiv that something could not be done he would accept it,' recalls Yashpal Kapoor who has seen the two boys

grow up since they were ten and twelve "But Sanjay would always talk back'

Not only is it reasonable to assume that Sanjay was not the kind of person to hide his views but the discussions even about Maruti, necessarily implied that he would talk about his own experience as a businessman, and about the hurdles that came his way Sanjay's views as revealed in my interview with him were those of a pragmatic industrialist, oblivious of the larger perspectives of social equality or sociological nuance The ideal framework for that, according to him was free enterprise

And not just that He was in favour of multinationals "Better to have them he said to Sathe later Collaboration will bring in money' But this was compounded by a complete ignorance of the Indian economic situation When Sathe pointed out to him that forty per cent of the country lived below the poverty line, and earned less than forty rupees a month—figures which had not been questioned even in parliament—Sanjay had turned around and exclaimed "This seems to be a wrong statistic. I look around and I don t see anyone who could earn less than 200 rupees a month''

This was very like what he said to another co-worker—that he thought village trade in UP was carried on by camels ' She must have thought he could take some time to get experience and leap for the sun' observed Sathe.

created such a sensation but Mrs Gandhi knew the tenor of the opinions it covered In fact, he must have given her a very graphic verbal account of it for her to have said that it should be toned down

This incident took place after the emergency Obviously, it was not planned to project the anti communist stand through her son It was too accidental Mrs Gandhi might have thought that nobody would take too much notice of what Sanjay had to say, or perhaps she let it go out as a feeler But I am convinced that when she saw the magnitude of the reaction it gave her the idea that it might be an ideal way to confuse the leftists of whom she had become suspicious and to provide a sop to big business at home and western pressure abroad She lives from day to day as a political colleague of her says expressively "and each manoeuvre conflicts in time with another But this manoeuvre fitted into the pattern of on the one hand, her ad hocism, and on the other, into the evolution of her style of parallel politics

Indira Gandhi s projection of her son, not only on the political scene but also as a symbol of the Right was going to be the biggest gamble of her life and the culmination of her capacity for Machiavellian design Till then she had operated her parallelism in the states and in the local Congress bodies It had flourished in the main organization, at the ideological level through the Nehru and socialist forums She had now brought it not only into the government, but also into the home She thought it could work out ideally for she could retain her own image as a radical, which I think she cherishes deep down in her heart But the stakes were too high and she was playing too close to the fire Because of this strategy and because of Sanjay she was going to become for the first time personally vulnerable to whatever was going to happen at the political level Her mind was made but like the British during the war she withdrew one step only to be able to take two steps forward later Not only did she make Sanjay recant she reasurred the various party representatives who voiced their protest that she was not planning for a change in government policy

We really believed that she was a moderate says Unnikrishnan 'and one thing I had alway had faith in—in her secularism and her broad outlook which gave us from the south a lot of confidence We thought we could have one symbol around

which we could fight There we made a mistake We were conditioned by Gandhi and Nehru and the thought that she was the inheritor of the Nehru legacy"

'I came to Mrs Gandhi s leadership after being on the verge of becoming a Naxalite, said Dharm Vir Sinha,[17] a young journalist politician from Bihar who was deputy minister of information and broadcasting under both I K. Gujral and Vidya Charan Shukla 'People like us have put so much faith in change under a dynamic leadership I thought violent change was not possible She promised fundamental, if not radical change It took us fifteen years to finish Mahatma Gandhi s revolution It took us four years to finish the promise of 1971"

'Indiraji is not a scientific socialist, said another disillusioned colleague She made it a point for survival"

When Chandrajit Yadav went to her about the interview, he asked her point blank Were these your views or Sanjay's?'

No not mine Sanjay's she answered

'He has expressed himself rather controversially against the basic concept of Congress policies" insisted Yadav "Mayn't that imply your acceptance?'

"You know his views are different than ours,' replied Mrs Gandhi 'He's not a thinker, he s a doer"

'Why don t you let him come into politics? he asked "He can work amongst the youth and in the slum areas so that he understands He can learn

Why did you suggest that when you knew what his views were and you obviously did not approve of them? I asked Yadav

Yadav s answer was so revealing—of the complex mixture of the desire to please Mrs Gandhi, of the reservations about her postures of the personal ambitions that worked against the party s needs of the pragmatic assessments that conflicted with ideological imperatives and of the contradictory involvements

[17]Dharm Vir Sinha forty five was born in Barha (n ar Patna) and sports a ragamuffin look He is short dark curly haired and talks brighter than he looks He belongs to B har He joined the Forward Bloc in 1946 but was a member of the Patna d strict committee in 1947 He became minister of state for labour information and tourism in the state government in 1970 He came saw and did not conquer the union ministry of information and broadcasting where he spent his tenures under I K Gujral and V C Shukla in comparat ve anonymity He is qu te a radical.

in making a future for Sanjay, that brought about a situation the Congress had never bargained for and its leadership had never dreamt of Yadav replied coolly We thought we could educate him We wanted young people He could be the focus

If Mrs Gandhi thought she could use Sanjay the leadership thought they could use him For her he was to be the symbol of the Right For them he was to be their instrument to power

Mrs Gandhi s answer to Yadav s unbelievable suggestion at that time was almost like a lie ' I do not want Sanjay to come into politics

There were four factors which obviously drove Indira Gandhi into adopting her emergency postures—her resentment against the leftist group which she thought was trying to dominate her with the growing fear that they would oust her her strategy to set up Sanjay as the focus for the Right—and thus even out the balance without disturbing her image—and to make him powerful enough to be effective with the masses her intention to stay in office and not be trapped into relinquishing it because of pressure from the opposition and her feeling that she could push through enough programmes of economic betterment to keep the people happy

Indira Gandhi might have pulled it off had it not been for miscalculations about Sanjay s capacity to do so too When she was not in power she had expressed the view that she did not want her sons to be in politics Much later according to some people when she began toying with the idea she thought it could be Rajiv, if anyone He expressed no such desire and preferred his job as a pilot in the Indian Airlines But the thinking of Jawaharlal Nehru the varied influences of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore which went into making her own character, and the childhood initiation into politics which were her actual schooling and through which she gradually matured—living for seventeen years within the environs of power with her father and with a husband who too was in politics—were criteria she did not apply when it came to her son Sanjay

Sanjay had no such background nor had he the inclination Sanjay in politics was like a bull in a china shop He came in from the top his initiation was immediate From 12 June he

began dealing, straight away, with union ministers on national issues His very first experience was that of confrontation politics both because of the timing of his entry, and of the nature of his temperament Perhaps Mrs Gandhi thought that was not politic It was certainly not political

"On politics politicians, ways of functioning, he had no clue, he didn t know the geography of India He truly didn t know how people lived in villages He knew Delhi very thoroughly—or how the mechanics lived, yes recalls a colleague of his C P N Singh, who was told by Mrs Gandhi to meet Sanjay and then saw him grow into the power he became observes, ' But he was very receptive and willing to know and I got the idea that he wanted to work and improve the lot of the poor He agreed with me that many mistakes had been committed Sycophants and hangers on were the ones who ruin things, I said He agreed He was simple straightforward, and C P N hesitated

Obtuse? ' I asked

No not at all But immature

Immaturity and power A deadly combination He had made his impact on the power structure behind the scenes But there had to be public sanction This came in through non political issues Indira Gandhi was right again Sanjay was not being political He was very clear about what he wanted done in terms of widening roads, transportation cleanliness beautification, sewage systems milk distribution and other civic amenities—first in Delhi and then elsewhere His interest created a stir of excitement in the bureaucratic hierarchy, which felt that if decisions could be taken at the level of the prime minister s son, things would move Sanjay began to meet all kinds of people, from politicians *rehriwallas* and ice cream vendors to journalists businessmen and social workers But soon enough it became apparent that Mrs Gandhi had decided to virtually bequeath to him the union territory of Delhi What did not however become apparent was the politics behind it all It was Indira Gandhi who was political not he She had every intention to help Sanjay to politicize, if necessary the areas of social work and the institutions of social welfare

This immediately became manifest in the creation of the Programme Implementation Committee (PIC) in August 1975 a high powered body set up to coordinate the work of govern

ment agencies and the local political leadership It had Delhi s top officials for its members—the lieutenant governor, the chief secretary the deputy inspector general of police, the chairman of the Delhi corporation and the vice-chairman of the Delhi development authority, besides many others Except for Mrs Tajdar Babbar,[17] who could be called Mrs Gandhi s nominee, the rest had all been suggested by Sanjay—Ambika Soni [18] Ajit Singh Chadha [19] J K Jain [20] Arjun Das and Raj Kaushik C P N Singh became honorary secretary but remained a category apart He was the only one amongst the younger lot with sound political experience Sanjay also knew it was Yunus who had recommended him He had too much respect for Yunus *Chacha* to treat CPN lightly or push him too hard The only senior Congressmen were H K L Bhagat who was chairman of the committee, and Chaudhry Hira Singh,[21] executive councillor,

[17]Mrs Tajdar Babbar member New Delhi municipal committee and chairman social welfare department President of PNT staff union for about four years and also member of the Waqf board advisory committee. She has been living in New Delhi for about twenty five years and working for the party s programme She is popular for the distribution of medicine among the poor and taking deserving cases to hospital She has arranged marriages of poor girls whose parents could not afford the expense

[18]Ambika Soni thirty six had some stormy months of glory as president of the Indian Youth Congress when Sanjay Gandhi s political debut made the Youth Congress more talked about than even its parent organization Ambika is the daughter of an ICS officer married to an officer in the Indian foreign service and has a background more staid and conservative for the role she carved out for herself An excellent orator she has won her way into the political arena with poise and vitality Now a member of the Rajya Sabha.

[19]Ajit Singh Chadha a young man in his thirties first began to be talked about when he became president of the Delhi University students union in 1968 69 In 1973 he became president of the South Delhi Congress His brush with power was also brief Short smart and a fair Sikh he came in with Sanjay and went out with him He was expelled from the Congress for anti party work in the elections

[20]Born in Aligarh in 1939 Janendra Kumar Jain is for all purposes a *Dilliwalla* He is a journalist cum politician who likes as he says meeting dignitaries travelling and social work He runs *A non* an aviation and tourism monthly and a publishing concern which concentrates on producing industrial directories while his most successful venture to date is an evening daily in Hindi—*Doorandesh* A member of the working committee of the DPCC Jain was known to be in Radha Raman s group

[21]Born in 1916 Chaudhry Hira Singh went to primary school in his home town, Narela In 1942 he was elected president of the Narela block committee

and in charge of development in the corporation Both of them did not know Sanjay at the time but began, soon enough, to deal with him directly The aim was to oversee the implementation of the twenty point programme and hear people s grievances

Within a month of the committee's formation, the accent shifted to more volatile issues—the demolition of *jhuggi jhonpris* the unauthorized mushroom growth of poor, ugly, makeshift, thatched house colonies which create slum areas in every city of India and family planning or control of the mushroom growth of poor starved ill fed babies that make nonsense of India s effort to match her progress with her population Several lakh human beings to be shifted and housed in Delhi alone, and the unbelievable rate of a population growth of twelve million births a year to be stopped! The task was stupendous urgent, and necessary

Demolition and resettlement became the concern of the municipal corporation under Commissioner Bahadur Ram Tamta [22] and of the Delhi development authority under Vice chairman Jagmohan,[23] with Sanjay s direct supervision and participation

From 1951 58 he was chairman of the Delhi district board Since 1964 he has been vice-president of the Delhi Rural Congress committee

On 26 April 1975 he took charge as executive councillor (Development) Delhi administration.

[22]Bahadur Ram Tamta, fifty-one was in the UP provincial civil service from where he was taken into the Indian frontier administrative service in July 1960 He came to Delhi on deputation to the cabinet secretariat stayed on to go through a course in the National Defence College and from then on to the civic bodies of Delhi He became somewhat of an expert in the field of muni cipal functioning Hence his utility in the slum clearance projects during the emergency He was over zealous too much efficiency got him into hot water He is now development commissioner in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

[23]Born in 1927 Jagmohan is known for his dynamic approach to town planning In the housing ministry and as vice-chairman of the Delhi development authority he has been associated with the growth of Delhi for a number of years His controversial role during the emergency finds an ironical twist in the fact that he was awarded the Padma Shri for his significant con tribution in the formulation and implementation of the Delhi master plan for playing a pioneering role in the planning and implementation of their development projects and for breaking new grounds in the matter of slum clearance He has now been given charge of the National Institute of Urban Affairs under the union ministry of works and housing

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Sanjay could never have acquired the authority to have the Delhi administration down from the lieutenant governor, obey ing his orders as they did in the capital Nor was he political enough to conduct such a calculated erosion of the Left all over India, as happened during the emergency, unless he had been guided by his mother

It was perhaps no coincidence that Sanjay's first encounter in the non political sphere should have been with an ex communist It led a quiet, dedicated but resolute man with a social commit ment to reform the Jama Masjid area into jail

The arrest of fifty seven year old Inder Mohan [24] who looks as if he could not hurt a fly caused the first fearful tremor in the capital after the emergency arrests of political leaders because it suggested that even non political opposition, thenceforth could invite grave danger to personal liberty

The case of Inder Mohan was symptomatic of everything that happened in India during the emergency when the known criteria for political behaviour the functioning of law and even the routine imperatives of ambition suffered a poisonous change Inder Mohan was a class I gazetted officer of the government of India an old political worker whose associates were men in top positions in the country like Inder Gujral and also Om Mehta who was not only a friend but the then minister of state for home and in charge of the union territories Every policeman in Delhi knew that I was close to him ' says Om Mehta himself ' But the home ministry gave the guidelines in the beginning of the emergency The actual arrests were ordered by the Delhi administration

The issue that Inder Mohan took up was the spark that turned

[21]Inder Mohan is fifty five and was born in Lahore He joined the All India Students Federation in 1940 and was a card holding member of the Communist Party of India as well as a member of the Congress It was in his capacity as Congressman that he attended the Ramgarh session that year He was arrested in 1942 In 1947 he became a trade union organizer and went to work in Kashmir on behalf of the National Conference the political party of Sheikh Abdullah who became prime minister of Kashmir in late 1947

After 1955 Inder Mohan did not remain a member of any political party and preferred to do social work

into a conflagration spreading across the entire north, with flames licking the very base of the Congress and then enveloping its leaders When Inder Mohan went to see Sanjay on 17 September 1975, it all seemed so simple He had only to explain the position, he thought, and any mature sensitive person would understand

There were two schemes that the government had already approved of in its plan to clean and beautify what had been classified officially as "the slum area of Jama Masjid,' a predominantly Muslim pocket which had the psychological make-up of a ghetto In one, the shops had to be shifted to a market at Paiwallan, and under the other the residents were to be rehabilitated at the complex of the Minto and Matasundari roads between Jama Masjid and Connaught Circus, thought to be near enough to enable people to go to work with impunity There were *human and communal issues involved and the schemes had to* be implemented with a sensitive concern for the sentiments of the people, and with their cooperation

On 4 October 1974 a meeting was convened by Om Mehta, then minister of state for works and housing and a formal resolution was passed in favour of a quick implementation of these schemes On 31 January and 1 February 1975 a seminar held on the subject arrived at the same decision by consensus With the emergency there had come about a quickening of the administrative pulse It was planned to demolish the shops and houses without waiting to provide alternative accommodation or an alternate market The people were stunned and Inder Mohan sent a representation to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi

"I have shown it to the PM' said N K Seshan when Inder Mohan asked about it But it must have been passed on to Sanjay He is dealing with Delhi affairs"

Seshan gave Inder Mohan Sanjay's direct number Ring him up anytime before 9 am If it s referred to me I ll say whatever is necessary

Inder Mohan rang and Sanjay himself came to the telephone

Come at 4 pm' he said

Where? asked Inder Mohan

'No 1 Safdarjang Road

I have no car and there s a great deal of security

Don t worry about that'

Inder Mohan genuinely expected something positive to emerge from the meeting Sanjay was polite, relaxed, and listened quietly In ten minutes Inder Mohan related the background of the storv When he said that the shopkeepers and others were tenants of the Wakf board[33] and they should not be uprooted just like that, Sanjay replied impatiently, Yes, I know all that'

But this is only one aspect" Inder Mohan tried to explain 'There are other problems There are craftsmen there and musicians women in purdah, sex segregation, so many emotional and psychological factors which operate along with economic ones'

'You just tell me what has to be done now," insisted Sanjay

"Their houses are being torn down," Inder Mohan pleaded

'They have to go where we send them," said Sanjay, If we make the market first and these people don t go and the emergency is lifted we'll lose all the money

'There's no question of their not going They ve been waiting for the market to come up You can take any guarantee you like You can come with me and see"

'Why should I go with you? I ve been going there myself"

"Sometimes it is good to go with a worker, aid Inder Mohan 'If a decision is correct and in their interest, people always agree, emergency or no emergency"

Sanjay smiled, but said cruelly, If you give us one crore eighty lakhs that it ll take to make the market, we don t mind if the people go there or not'

Inder Mohan was stunned Was it only the money that bothered this young man?

"Our information is that the people will go wherever we tell

[33]*Wakf* or its plural *aukaf* are Muslim religious endowments which were constituted centuries ago by Muslim kings and noblemen They consist of land houses and shops the income from which is meant for the maintenance of shrines mosques and the feeding of the poor The Wakf in India is in charge of a Muslim minister at the Centre and a Muslim minister in each state. There is the Central Wakf Board under the union minister and state Wakf boards under the state minister Why the issue of management becomes so delicate is that Wakf property is estimated to be worth 400 crores The interest from this alone should be forty crores. Actually it is only nine lakhs As a result, instead of doing good to a large majority the endowments feather the nest of only a few *mutawalis* (keepers of shrines)

them to," continued Sanjay "It is leaders like you who spread disaffection

I m not a leader, only a worker,' Inder Mohan replied quietly If I had wanted to, I could have become one the opportunities were all there"

How?" Sanjay was curious enough to ask

I spent three and a half years in jail in 1942 Lots of my colleagues have risen to some position or the other, but I preferred to remain a worker If I had been a leader I would have gone on flattering you and said yes to everything you say

Sanjay smiled but apparently he was seething inside There was a silence

'You please do what we want he said finally

The tone was even There was no sign of imperiousness

'I have no position no status Besides I differ with you so how can I have something done! Inder Mohan exclaimed

At that Sanjay got up, folded his hands in a *namaste* (greeting) and walked out of the room

The next morning Inder Mohan met Om Mehta The authorities those days would speak in the name of the lieu tenant governor and never mention Sanjay who was working behind the scenes When Mehta realized that Inder Mohan knew everything he laughed

Look Inder Mohan insisted seriously This will nullify everything that had been decided earlier

'Don t worry replied Mehta 'I m going to the PM just now and I ll see to it that things are set right

I ve heard that whoever comes into conflict with him is arrested remarked Inder Mohan

Mehta laughed again At that point Yashpal Kapoor walked in

Who s being arrested? he asked in his usual hail fellow well met manner

'In your emergency I ll probably be the one said Inder Mohan

Kapoor took it lightly enough Some of our own people deserve to be arrested if anything he joked

On the afternoon of the 19th Inder Mohan met Jagmohan in his spacious office in the DDA s eighteenth floor building Vikas Minar

'I met Sanjay yesterday," Inder Mohan told the DDA chief, and recounted the discussion What is your plan now? Where do we stand?

'I have been trying to contact you said Jagmohan I believe the decision about your arrest has already been taken I wanted to forewarn you to go to Om Mehta and have something done

I don t want to tell him to save me He knows everything You tell me what you intend to do about the Jama Masjid people'

'I believe it was a South Indian who fixed your appointment, remarked Jagmohan

Not a South Indian Seshan He suggested that I meet Sanjay, that s all

Sanjay doesn't even remember meeting you, insisted Jag mohan

Inder Mohan finally lost patience

'Look, Jagmohan Sanjay may not be super intelligent, but he s not stupid We talked for forty five minutes alone, and the whole thing is put on record in the PM s house

That very day, soon after midnight, there came the proverbial knock on the door of his first floor flat in the multistoreyed building on Kasturba Gandhi Road

Inder Mohan was in his shirt and *lungi* when he opened the door Seven burly men in plain clothes stormed in and two of them held him by the scruff of his neck, pinning him to the wall

We ve been ordered to give you third degree treatment,' they said

Then an eighth person entered this time in uniform Inder Mohan learnt that senior police had been waiting downstairs to see that he was apprehended The men were in an aggressive mood They would not let him change or lock up his flat, even when he told them that he stayed alone

Why do you stay alone? one of them asked insolently

'That is none of your business retorted Inder Mohan

That is when they lifted him up by his arms and legs four men on each side carried him through the empty passage and down stairs and flung him into a waiting jeep He was put into the police lock up at the Daryaganj police station in which the makeshift lavatory was heaped with filth to make the stench unbearable No sensitive person could eat or drink in that environment Inder Mohan went on a hunger strike During the four days that he

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was kept there they pushed in four criminals to intimidate him, one of whom was a police spy On the fourth morning Mir Mushtaq[26] chairman of the Delhi metropolitan council, went to see him Superintendent of Police Ohri who was in charge, did not accompany him Ohri was a fellow rotarian and a friend of Inder Mohan He felt too ashamed to face him ' They are taking you to the courts and then to Tihar jail, said the Mir "You must break your fast

When he was taken to the Tees Hazari courts the morning after his arrest, he saw some people from Jama Masjid They had informed others, particularly an old friend and lawyer Danial Latifi[27] Inder Mohan was finally transferred to Tihar jail where conditions were only slightly better Twice when he was taken to court, he was paraded through the streets in handcuffs, like an ordinary criminal

' You ve been arrested because you re a Hindu ' Jagmohan told him after his arrest The Muslims will be arrested after Id " The same day Jagmohan met Inder Gujral who exclaimed sadly about Inder Mohan 'He s an honest man and does good work But the one mistake he shouldn t have made was to have fought with Sanjay

[26]Mir Mushtaq looks older than his sixty two years Habits have taken their toll of his physique though the mind is good enough to have survived the emergency with some solid tight rope walking As member of the Students Federation in 1936 his leftism was too far back to invoke the new hostility In 1940 he offered a one man satyagraha and was jailed. Again in 1942 he was jailed He was magistrate in Delhi during the riots In 1947 he left the Congress to join the Congress Socialist Party He went back to the Congress in 1962 and became DPCC secretary DPCC president in 1972 and chairman of the metropolitan council He moves slowly his eyes peer vaguely from behind his glasses and he looks almost always in a daze The emergency did not do much to clarify his vision

[27]Danial Latifi sixty has illustrious antecedents His grandfather was the late Justice Badruddin Tyabji who was president of the Congress in 1887 and he himself inherited the passion to fight for lost causes and to make the law cases he took up winning ones School in Rugby and then the Honours School of Jurisprudence at Oxford led him into revolutionary student politics and the Indian freedom struggle rather than away from it With Mohan Kumaramangalam and Feroze Gandhi he was co-founder of the Federation of Indian Student Societies in Great Britain and Ireland Back in India, it was underground jail independence and the law and during the emergency all the lost causes all over again No wonder it was him that Inder Mohan could rely upon

When Om Mehta learnt of Inder Mohan s humiliation, he rang Bhawanimal, the inspector general of police

' Sir, said the IG, "the administration has ordered his arrest '

' Whatever it is, he should not have been paraded like that," the minister said

Bhawanimal himself did not know the reason for the arrest, and as for Om Mehta, ' I had no power to release he ex plained shamefacedly to me when I spoke to him months later

You have made him into a hero, remonstrated Delhi s Lieutenant Governor Kishan Chand[18] to Mir Mushtaq when the latter went to see him

However Inder Mohan continued to be harassed He knew he would lose his job but what really stunned him was the ruth lessness of the way in which they tried to destroy his integrity Not only was a propaganda machine set in motion to brand him as either a CIA agent or a Naxalite, there was even a false file kept on him in the office to substantiate this claim Old friends and associates fell into the trap or "like Subhadra Joshi[19] they played a dubious role ' says Inder Mohan

An old fireband colleague of Indira Gandhi, Subhadra Joshi worked closely with the PM during the riot torn days in Delhi after the partition A leftist, she fitted perfectly into Mrs Gandhi s ideological groove She supported the emergency but was also familiar enough with Inder Mohan s background to know that politically it was certainly akin to her own Yet she rang Danial Latifi

[18]Now sixty Kishan Chand belongs to the Indian civil service one of the last members of the steel frame of the British empire He has a distinguished academic record with a diploma in German from Vienna LL M from London and a stint at Oxford He was secretary general of the Afro-Asian rural re-construction organization in New Delhi when he was brought as lieutenant governor of the capital and into all the hazards of functioning too close to the heart of power A heavily built man he wears glasses but does not have the look of arrogance he could not give even a style to his subservience

[19]Born in 1919 at Barur (Madhya Pradesh) Subhadra Joshi (nee Datta went to the Forman Christian College Lahore She married B D Joshi in 1948 became a Congress member of the first Lok Sabha in 1952 at the age of thirty three and was elected again in 1952 1962 and 1970 The Left was the draw and so was the concept of secularism. She is known for her work amongst the Muslims and made her contacts along with Indira Gandhi in Delhi in the post partition riots Acknowledged as a spirited worker her options during the emergency ran into contradictions

I ve heard you re doing Inder s case
' Yes " he said

I ve been doing so much work in my constituency ' said Subhadra Joshi sounding almost pathet c Why does he keep going to the *mohallas* and interfering? I believe he s with the CIA and the Naxalites!

Latifi was disgusted You ve known him since Lahore I can appreciate your concern for your constituency But the tradition in this *country is that when a person is in jail the people are with* him He s in jail you re not! he said, and banged the receiver down

The next time D R Goyal Subhadra Joshi s associate and editor of her magazine *Secular Democracy* rang Latifi

I believe Inder Mohan is an agent of the Imam, [30] he said, referring to the Imam of Jama Masjid who had almost incited a riot against the government early that year

Latifi was equally brusque with Goyal ' I know and you know what Inder is he said

If Indira Gandhi was allowing Sanjay the run of officialdom, she also knew there was trouble brewing over his twin concerns of demolition and resettlement It was just the beginning yet she asked Mohammad Yunus to enquire into the affair even before the Inder Mohan incident Yunus had not been appointed special envoy till then There had been some moves to bring him into politics a year earlier, soon after he retired as commerce ministry secretary but years of bureaucratic functioning and his own impatience with the smooth hypocrisies that mark the political scene had made him realize that he should opt out

[30]The Imam of Jama Masjid and his son get a salary from the central Wakf board The hered tary principle is not accepted in Islam Even the early Caliphs were elected Till they were torn down the rental from shops around Jama Masjid used to go to the Imam In February 1975 th re was trouble the Naib Imam (the son) managed to succeed his father and led a demonstration against a meeting of the Wakf board to demand more pay as well There was violence He was arrested Out of jail he became very pol tical His resound ing perorat ons against the then government and the Congress despite his apparent eccentricity did a lot to spread anti Congress fury amongst the Muslims Young robust in flowing robes and flowing beard he manages to sway an aud ence if not convince it

Mrs Gandhi however, appointed him later in so many capacities in various organizations "to tone them up a bit" that it made Charat Ram the big time industrialist from Delhi exclaim to him once at a party, "Does madam want to kill you! [31]

In August he was so immersed in an elaborately conceived welfare project in Palam, that the only time he could salvage for this additional task given to him was the unearthly hour of 5 30 one morning Shahnawaz Khan [32] who was minister for Aukaf in the union government, accompanied him They were met by Mir Mushtaq at Jama Masjid itself They did not talk to anybody else ' I just saw the location and the possibilities it offered Then I went and told the PM, said Yunus ' My recommendation was that there should be 1,000 shops instead of only 400 that they were thinking of to be made in the Paiwallan area and also that there could be a whole row of shops under neath the Urdu bazaar [33]

[31]Yunus was the prime minister s special envoy Asia trade fair authority chairman coord nation committee chairman of the non aligned countries Press Agencies Pool Samachar director as well as managing director of Associated Journals Ltd chairman of the Indian Communication Centre director of Steel Authority Telephone Industries and General Insurance and member of the Board of Trade and the Aligarh Muslim University executive council

[32]Shahnawaz Khan has had an unusual career He was born in Matore in 1914 and educated at the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College (Dehradun) He was commissioned in the army in 1936 but joined the Indian National Army created by the revolutionary Subhash Chandra Bose to fight the British Shahnawaz became a major general in the INA but was nearly hanged when he and his associates were triedby the British in a famous trial at Red Fort He is so gentle that even his voice sinks into soft reserves He was union minister of state for food and agriculture including Aukaf

[33]The DDA prepared a master plan for Delhi (1962-81) and notified it under the statutory provisions of the *Delhi Development Act* on 1 September 1962

Over the years the environment around Jama Masjid deteriorated particularly after 1947 Hundreds of junk stores and squatter shops came up on the stone stairway of Jama Masjid and the area around The junk stores on the eastern side of the mosque were cleared by the DDA and the area developed as a terraced Mughal style garden But the 600 squatter shops on the stairway of Jama Masjid and its immediate vicinity presented a baffling question Their removal and settlement in the site nearby known as Paiwallan was envisaged to form an integral part of the programme of rebuilding Shahjahanabad Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad had agreed with this scheme but was summarily disregarded by Sanjay

you can ask any one of them to undertake an enquiry into a riot, for instance You do the enquiry and go back to your job I don t talk about everything This is one thing I have learnt in thirty years in the secretariat Not to poke my nose in other people s affairs

'Not even the prime minister s?

Yes Not in tasks I was not given to do

Why did she involve you in what I would call these extra curricular matters then?

Maybe she wanted independent opinion I am reminded of what happened in 1964 when Sheikh Abdullah[34] was released after ten years Panditji[35] asked me to go and meet him at the airport I was only joint secretary in the foreign office then But when the opposition raised a hue and cry Panditji said they shouldn t see too much into the matter that he knew me and that I knew the Sheikh well that was the reason It was the same when Maulana Azad[36] died He had no relatives and he had always treated me with great affection since pre independence days when he knew me as Abdul Ghaffar Khan s[37] secretary and in the freedom struggle When he died I was only a director

[34]Sheikh Abdullah the storm centre of Kashmir politics whose ups and downs virtually govern Kashmir s relations with the Centre Tall imposing gruff but sentimental and a friend of Gandhi and Nehru he aroused suspicion about his attitude to Kashmir s relations with Ind a after 1947 Hence jail in 1953 He is ch ef m nister again of his beloved homeland Kashmir is what matters to me says the Sheikh

[35]Jawaharlal Nehru

[36]Maulana Abul Kalam Azad again a colleague of Nehru belongs to an era which is slowly becoming legendary form uch of India s growing generations He was an orator to remember Congress president in pre independence India and union m nister for education after 1947 A recluse scholar, and statesman he has left some unpublished records as an appendix to his book *Ind a W ins Freedom* to be read later as his views on the controversial trends in India s modern age and the people who brought it about He died in 1958

[37]Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was known as the Frontier Gandhi in India s freedom struggle because of his strict imposition of non violence amongst his trigger happy tribesmen of the North West Frontier Province His was a fantastic achievement in non communal politics his soft spoken authority virtually triumphed over human nature Badshah Khan found the partition of India a betrayal to his cause of unity among people of various religions and he declared that his people had been thrown to the wolves His has been one long fight against injustice and wrong even in his homeland in Pakistan This has led him to alternate between ja l and ill health house arrest and freedom

in the foreign service but I was asked to look after the arrangements in the house only because of my relations with him'

'Perhaps it's a confusing line for people to draw between your functioning as a bureaucrat and a politician

"Maybe But I was very clear I was asked too, but that is why I didn't attend the Congress sessions at Chandigarh or Gauhati I wanted to keep out of it

But you were also known to be personally close to Pandit Nehru, and now, to Indira Gandhi

It's an association of forty years yes It made everybody think I must be involved in everything"

In this case about Jama Masjid given your bureaucratic conditioning didn t you even as a citizen want to find out what fate your own suggestions had met with?

Look, if a man has twelve jobs can he do much else? Each job entailed administrative responsibility I had to follow up matters there and not where I was merely asked to report and the responsibility lay with others In between people would come to me for help with loans or some other hurdle I rang up relevant authorities for them to see I told even Inder Mohan and his friends that I had nothing to do with it, that they should see the concerned officers I was surprised why people kept coming to me about matters with which I had nothing to do

'Were you ideologically hostile to him? Against the leftists I mean at the time?

I was not concerned with what his ideological background was Personally he had never been a friend of mine But because of my political past I had had friends in all the camps Most of the leftists as you call them used to trust me for political briefings when I was in the foreign office most of them were good friends whom I had known since Lahore days men and women I had known for more than forty years—Sajjad Aruna Mazhar (now in Pakistan) Mohan Perin, Romesh, Renu Nikhil or Parvati[38]

[38]The late Sajjad Zaheer eminent Urdu writer and communist was implicated in the famous Rawalpindi conspiracy case to blow up Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in 1948-49

Aruna Asaf Ali in her sixties is an ardent Congresswoman who came close to Jayaprakash Narayan then finally joined the Communist Party of India Her husband Congress leader Asaf Ali was India's first ambassador to the US

and Dr Ahmed[39]—including Hiren Mukherjee[40] That had nothing to with it"

To me it seems that Mrs Gandhi entered a very anti Left phase in this period, and preferred to have such people around her who agreed with her current mood

"Well I ve never felt that everything is wrong with the com munists As I said I've had such good friends amongst them I've always felt they are highly qualified and dedicated persons, but I ve never agreed with their policies, particularly their habit of waiting for hints from abroad This is what they did in 1942, and more recently about the budget in 1976 They criticized it severely at the outset, but when the Soviet Union showered praises they changed their tune There s a very revealing incident I remember about Badshah Khan s visit to India in 1968 When he met Jyoti Basu[41] in Calcutta Badshah Khan asked him 'How is it that

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Mazhar was the nephew of Sir Sikandar Hayat Tiwana chief minister of undivided Punjab and former editor of *Pakistan Times*

Perin Chandra (nee Barucha) member of the Students Federation in Lahore and of the Communist Party of India is associated with *New Wave* a breakaway weekly from *Link* and *Patriot* the leftist group of publications She is president of the World Peace and Solidarity Organization

Romesh Chandra runaway son of the establishment became a dedicated communist His father was a member of the Indian civil service Chandra is now secretary general of the World Peace Council

Renu Chakravarty (nee Roy) is the niece of the late B C Roy eminent Congressman and a colleague of Nehru Cambridge preceded communism and membership of parliament An ex lecturer turned fiery revolutionary

Nikhil Chakravarty is the editor of *Mainstream*

Parvati Krishnan is the communist member of parliament whose brother was Mohan Kumaramangalam and father Dr Subroyan minister of labour in Nehru s government

[39]The cricket loving sixty nine year-old Dr Zain Ahmed began his politics with the Congress became member of the national executive of the Congress Socialist Party in 1937 40 In 1943 he was a member of the Communist Party in UP and by 1951 a member of its central committee In 1973 he became president of the All India Kisan Sabha He is a member of parliament and interested in political writing

[40]Hiren Mukherjee seventy and an institution in Indian politics came in from Oxford and Lincoln s Inn (London) to education the Congress the Congress Socialist Party and to more extremes in political philosophy—communism I ve known Mohammad Yunus for many years I prize him as a friend he said once A patriot to his finger tips proud of his country and full of a spirited sense of self respect

[41]Jyoti Basu the sixty two year old Bengali was a member of the Com

everything in India is in twos the Congress Party the Socialist Party, even the Communist Party? Basu tried to explain the international phenomenon of the communist split Badshah Khan immediately retorted 'Ah then are there two communist parties in Russia and two in China? When we were coming out of the room Basu exclaimed to me The old man is very sharp isn t he? I suppose I m more cynical about it than anything else '

Why she went in for the emergency I don t know said communist leader Prem Sagar Gupta 'but we (CPI) supported it to foil the game of Right reaction to forcibly capture political power at the Centre Perhaps it was too early for the fact to have become obvious, at that time that Indira on her part thought she was reacting to the exact opposite of such forces—the Left adventurists as she might have called them at that stage Either way it was a power game with the highest of stakes involved It was ironical that with this as the background the battle was being fought on the surface—in the bye lanes of Jama Masjid the pavements of urban *mohallas* and in the family planning camps of ardent new politicos It portended the most unbelievable de politicization of the Indian scene witnessed by anybody Sanjay Gandhi began to echo a pet phrase of his mother s which she would use when in difficulty There is no such thing as leftism or rightism For us what matters is how we apply these theories to India ' At Pandaul in Bihar on 20 February 1976 Sanjay came out with one of his first statements on the subject in a public meeting ' Stop wrangling over leftism and rightism and devote time to people's welfare he told senior Congressmen

It was precisely over this point that the entire city of Delhi was beginning to feel incensed—the people Prem Sagar Gupta s first letter to the PM and the lieutenant governor on the misuse of the emergency was on 5 August 1975—within two months of its promulgation It was about all that was happening to the people—without a system and on what looked like an ad hoc basis It was the forced removal of thousands of poor families

munist Party of Britain before he returned to India in 1940 By 1948 he was secretary in the secretariat of the Communist Party of India and in 1964 he became a member of the breakaway Communist Party of India (Marxist) He was deputy chief minister and home minister in the first non Congress United Front government of West Bengal in 1969 He became chief minister of the CPI(M) ministry in West Bengal in 1977

A few days later, Dhar rang him up and told him that the PM wanted concrete examples of where the employment of those evictees had been affected and how Do a sample survey of about 100 persons advised Dhar

I did recalls Gupta I found that fifty per cent had lost their means of livelihood ' The sample survey was not signed Dhar gave it to the PM She passed it on to Sanjay who in turn gave it to the very people against whom there were complaints—the DDA One of the officers K K Nair was deputed to look into the matter He got the people to say that they had settled down happily Such was the fear that nobody dared utter a contrary word but they told Gupta later that they had been blackmailed into giving their statements The point is why was the enquiry given to be conducted by the same authority which was the accused? asked Gupta

Even if several lakhs of people were rehabilitated in better surroundings as they were later two questions arose what was the cost in terms of human misery and what was the guarantee that several lakhs more would not take their place? Who would stop the influx of the poor into the cities in search of a full meal and a pavement to sleep on rather than a measly meal and nothing to hope for? Who was going to make the Indian village a home to its inhabitants rather than the hell they wanted to escape from?

What was needed in the slum clearance operations during the emergency which spread all over India under Sanjay s growing *authority and even more bloating ego was humanity and* imagination But as Mrs Gandhi had said Sanjay was a doer not a thinker To him it all seemed very clear Here were lakhs of people who lived a sub human existence anyway If they were dumped on open ground under torrential rain if they suffered further inhuman conditions it was nothing new for them They would have their plots allotted to them and gradually they would settle down Meanwhile if a new born child died or an old man fell victim to the rain or the cold and a family succumbed to disease well—those were the hazards of making Delhi beautiful

When these operations stretched into the biting winter of Delhi Shashi Bhushan went to Sanjay in despair There was censorship there was a clear order that no story should appear

about demolitions so that people should not be incensed The right to strike protest or demonstrate had been disallowed under conditions of the emergency, so there was no avenue to voice grievances, with the fear that telling the truth or making even the effort to right a wrong would land people into jail, like it did Inder Mohan This prevented the people from facing even in their own minds the reality of the situation But Shashi Bhushan was a Congressman involved in the affairs of Delhi, and confident in his association with the boy who was becoming a terror for the masses

These people are dying in the cold he warned Sanjay about the *jhuggiwallas* (shanty dwellers)

Sanjay shrugged Well people die all the time anyway

He is so casual it is unbelievable remarked Shashi Bhushan later to me Mrs Gandhi I know, is not inhuman

But the complaints were reaching Mrs Gandhi She had sent Yunus one of her most trusted persons to find out about Jama Masjid The action taken did not conform to his suggestions Prem Sagar Gupta had sent a written complaint and a survey Dhar had not held it back But the prime minister had sent it off to the very people against whom it contained the complaints Above all there was Subhadra Joshi, her old friend comrade and storm trooper as she was known Subhadra Joshi and Shashi Bhushan were frank enough at a meeting called by Mrs Gandhi which consisted of the MPs of Delhi the executive councillors the lieutenant governor and Sanjay to point out the atrocities being committed in the name of cleanliness

Till then I didn t know Sanjay was involved described Subhadra Joshi I didn t even attach any significance to his presence He certainly marked her attitude as did his mother for the repercussions came soon enough for Subhadra not in the form of jail but in the steady erosion of her communication with Mrs Gandhi Even Commissioner Tamta sensed it and advised her to leave Delhi 'It will be in your own interest he said But Subhadra Joshi persisted with the confidence born out of their old friendship and association and wrote again to Mrs Gandhi that this 'cleanliness operation could be conducted with a concern for children s schooling the inclemencies of the weather and provision of alternate accommodation [43] But

[43] *Secular Democracy* 11 April 1977

she found that even the officials had stopped talking to her The lieutenant governor would no longer ring back She could never get the other officers on the telephone

Shop fronts shanties mosques, temples were demolished says Subhadra Joshi The people came running and we felt paralyzed If Sanjay was callous Mrs Gandhi had turned to stone Subhadra Joshi hurt and disenchanted spoke sorrowfully of Mrs Gandhi s pretended ignorance about what had been happening She is unfair It does not behove a person like her who has been given faith and trust by the people in such abundant measure I therefore feel constrained to make public some of the facts which are a part of my knowledge and experience It is painful to say something which proves Indiraji less than truthful

Like his mother again Sanjay was beginning to function at several levels But it was not all one way Specially after the 12th of June, when he had started taking interest in activities, we used to take people particularly young people to the PM s place to show that they were behind her Sanjay used to tell us to bring the crowds We decided then said Youth Congress General Secretary Har Charan Singh Josh[44] that he should be drawn into the Youth Congress We thought he would be useful Within fifteen days of that however, Sanjay was discussing with them the reactivation of the Youth Congress and implementation of the twenty point programme But the method he suggested was typical of him— *Change the state presidents of Andhra Bihar* and Madhya Pradesh they re over age

How? asked somebody

Consult Raghuramaiah[45] for Andhra Pradesh Prakash Chand

[44]Har Charan Singh Josh is a fair tall good looking thirty three a lawyer and youth leader whose interest began with student union politics In 1969 he was the sole nominee of the Ind an Youth Congress to the International Youth Congress at Hungary By profession an advocate he became general secretary All Ind a Youth Congress in 1974 In 1975 he organized family plann ng camps according to the drive initiated by Sanjay but maintains that his atti tudes were pol tical not administrative He was observer for Madhya Pradesh on the debacle of the Congress in March 1977

[45]K Raghuramaiah was born in 1912 in Sangamjagarlamudi in Andhra Pradesh He was union minister of parliamentary affairs and works and housing in Mrs Gandhi s government but even the great anti Ind ra wave did not prevent his victory in the 1977 elections making it his fifth Lok Sabha in suc

Sethi[46] for Madhya Pradesh and Sita Ram Kesri for Bihar affairs advised Sanjay

Not only was it clear who the leading Congressmen were about whom he was confident it was also clear that he was going to use all the power and influence there was at the top Priya Ranjan Das Munshi[47] was the president of the Youth Congress at the time He agreed at that moment But when he told Vayalar Ravi[48] the member of parliament from Kerala about the con versation Vayalar exclaimed You re the king of youth he s only the PM s son Munshi began to delay the decision about the three presidents Eventually the two in Madhya Pradesh and Andhra were changed, but he retained the one in Bihar Sanjay felt he had been insulted and his authority questioned

In September Sanjay called the state Youth Congress presidents for a meeting Even Congress General Secretary P V Narasimha Rao attended the meeting There the decision was taken by con sensus that Munshi should be ousted Sanjay wasn t even a member of the Youth Congress then! said Josh

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cession A gold medalist orator in college a lawyer from the Middle Temple (London) a government officer a trade union leader and finally a politician who began as deputy defence minister under Nehru in 1957 and continued as minister in various portfolios till the last Congress government he claimed the proud record of having served two generations of the Nehrus and was willing to serve the third—Sanjay

[46]Prakash Chand Sethi grey eyed round faced and mild mannered looks young for his fifty seven years He had grit enough to win a steady way to the top mostly in politics at the Centre He was born in Rajasthan but belongs to Madhya Pradesh He first became member of the Rajya Sabha in 1961 of the Lok Sabha in 1967 70 and deputy minister in the union ministry of steel and mines From then on it was a succession of ministerial appointments including one as Madhya Pradesh chief minister in 1972 75 then back to the Centre as union m nister for petroleum and chemicals and treasurer of the AICC The strain was compounded by the conditions of the emergency

[47]Priya Ranjan Das Munshi thirty two sings the songs of Tagore and writes poetry an activity which goes w ll with Bengal s style of revolut onary politics Munshi is a firebrand Congressman who was against Siddhartha Shankar Ray but joined with him later in his stand about Sanjay Gandhi

[48]Vayalar Ravi says that reading and political discussions are his hobbies They are a part of his profession as well At forty he is an advocate from Kerala who concentrated on youth politics He was founder general secretary and president of the Kerala students union, convener of the Kerala Youth Congress secretary of the Indian Youth Congress and member AICC

And then enter Ambika Soni

Thirty four warm sophisticated and ambitious with a healthy charm She had met Castro in Mexico once when she had been there with her husband (who was in the foreign service) and was thoroughly impressed she met Mrs Gandhi when the PM had come there on an official visit and was thoroughly entranced She asked the PM if she could work in the Congress and when she said yes Ambika left the glamour of the international scene for the drama of the domestic one Her first experience was the election campaign of Mukul Banerjee [49] Congress candidate from Delhi for the 1971 elections Ambika had been commuting between the Congress office in Delhi and her husband s posts abroad when the Sanjay phenomenon struck Delhi and youth got a fillip *Ambika for President* after Munshi resigned did not strike older leaders in the Youth Congress as a palatable alternative to their own candidatures But realizing they would not get it they began manoeuvring for Sanjay to become president Sanjay himself did not think he should agree lest people conclude that he had got Munshi out only for that purpose He would not take even this decision on his own When Har Charan Singh Josh Surinder Singh (son of Bansi Lal and treasurer of the Youth Congress), and Gundu Rao [50] who was information minister in the Karnataka ministry but was a former president of the Youth Congress himself went to Sanjay to persuade him to agree he said I don t have any interest but talk to Indiraji

Dhawan the PM s private secretary scotched the move at his own level by telling all three when they went to him for an appointment with the prime minister that he knew she would not like it and would not appreciate people saying that after Munshi she wanted her own son

[49]The heavily powdered face of Mukul Banerjee with the big *tika* mark on the forehead was familiar in the women s section of the AICC for years a loyal admirer of Indira Gandhi she made a good administrator but the *Indira wave* in 1971 plummetted her into the Lok Sabha and into a fluster she could not quite cope with Mukul was born in Benares in 1925

[50]Forty three-year-old Gundu Rao is an affluent owner of coffee estates born in Marcara (Karnataka) He was president of the Marcara municipal board for twelve years before he became president of the Karnataka Pradesh Youth Congress and thence into Sanjay Gandhi s circle of action men He became minister of state for information in the Karnataka government in 1974 and minister for housing in 1977

We thought this did reflect Mrs Gandhi s view," recalled Josh 'We conveyed this to Sanjay He said OK But I think Ambika manipulated it. She was friendly with Dhawan Also Sanjay, I think reasoned that he could easily operate the Youth Congress through her

Ambika Soni was nominated president of the Youth Congress on 12 November 1975 by the Congress president On 9 December this was ratified at a meeting of the presidents of various states and Sanjay Gandhi was made a member of the national council of the Indian Youth Congress his first political office Every body knew that he not Ambika was going to be the force behind the Youth Congress And characteristically, certain precedents were broken straight away Previously the state Youth Congress presidents used to get funds from the Pradesh Congress committees while the All India Youth Congress got it from the AICC This changed Congress President Barooah allowed the Youth Congress to collect the money directly for the first time ever Previously we were part and parcel of the Congress We followed the parent organization but we led also After 1972 the Youth Congress president even began to be invited to attend the Congress working committee meetings But after Sanjay, the conflict started said Josh

Before I came as president said Ambika Soni there was no money, there were no accounts and there were debts on my hands I printed fifty lakh membership forms all those who took them signed for them while the office bearers had to pay thirty five paise per form For the first time we opened a bank account Even if only one hundred rupees had to be withdrawn two people had to sign it—the treasurer and I There was an office account even for the *chaiwalla* (tea seller) and there had to be proper receipts I was most impressed with Sanjay because when people came to me with donations I went to him and he said No no Ambika I don t want to get involved in money matters It s so different from what happened later that I don t know what to believe He s just not political

The more vehemently those who associated with Sanjay say he is not political the more obvious it becomes that behind the political moves there could only be one person—his mother Even his mother s choice of people would be determined obviously, by a political criterion Ambika was brought into

politics by Indira Gandhi and Ambika is a highly political person When it came to a choice by Sanjay, it turned to be somebody totally non political like himself and the political scene acquired a raffish air

I ve got somebody here with a whopping reputation he said to Ambika in December one day

Who? She was curious

Rukhsana Sultana [51] said Sanjay

It was then that I myself met the flashy Rukhsana sitting prettily alone on a chair amongst a crowd of assorted people who were waiting to see Sanjay at 1 Akbar Road one afternoon She was thirty two attractive and had married and divorced the grandson of Sir Sobha Singh one of Delhi s leading citizens who made millions as contractor for Lutyen s architectural creations of New Delhi I had seen Rukhsana at innumerable cultural functions and known her for her fascination for music—and musicians to borrow Oscar Wilde s phrase

What are you doing here? I couldn t help asking

I ve come to work for Sanjayji answered Rukhsana In the slums she added

I looked at her beautifully made up face the arched eyebrows the coquettish black eyes which peered over huge dark glasses that kept slipping down her nose and the long painted nails the mass of dark wavy hair the diamonds on her ears and fingers the dark printed chiffon saree worn with casual grace and the *whiffs of French perfume that filled the air around her She looked* and was the typical flamboyant woman of high fashion and leisured tastes What on earth was she going to do in the slums I wondered, and which slums?

Jama Masjid she said You see when I heard that Sanjayji was taking interest and wanted people to work for him I was really enthusiastic I felt like doing something for the first time I came and told him I would do anything he wanted me to Will you go to Jama Masjid? he asked I want somebody to work there for cleanliness and family planning I was a bit taken aback I confess I didn t even know what it looked like—a slum I mean—

[51] Rukhsana Sultana s real name is Minoo Bimbit Her mother is the sister of the famous actress Begum Para and her father a Sikh She was married to Shivendra Singh and has a twelve year-old daughter She is the niece of the present attorney general of Pakistan Pirzada

and I had heard that the Jama Masjid area was filthy I thought for a moment, but then I said, 'Yes I will work there' It was a challenge you know, darling and I love challenges So I began to work I've been going there since the last two months

There was nothing stilted about Rukhsana's loquacious charm, nor about the biting frankness with which she aired her views about the old Congress workers 'Darling' she confided to me using her favourite term of endearment, 'I told Sanjayji I was not going to wear *khaddar* or stop using make up or change my style at all I was going to go as I am and be accepted as I am I was not going to be a hypocrite like those women you know They act so coy and hide their virtue behind all that *khaddar* but when it comes to getting anything *they are ready to lift their sarees above their heads at the first provocation!*

Jama Masjid must be in a state of ferment I thought but so were the drawing rooms of Delhi and certainly Bombay where Rukhsana had been a familiar figure as a designer of antique jewellery which she sold mostly to film stars I learnt that she had introduced herself in the Jama Masjid area by visiting the schools, talking about cleanliness, and condemning the use of the *burqua* (veil) But if she provoked a hostile reaction to the latter in that very rigid and conservative crowd she also made them feel that she could get things done for them that the administration was behind her and that Sanjay was the power that drove her She did have bottlenecks removed long pending problems solved and financial allocations cleared with one telephone call to the relevant administrative head She had the confident knowledge that they had been told to back her to the hilt by Navin Chawla[52] special assistant of Delhi's lieutenant governor who was a childhood associate of Sanjay The links were too obvious for people not to realize who was at the controls Rukhsana's references to

[52]Navin Bratt Chawla His career was short and not so-sweet He was born in 1945 and joined the Indian administrative service in 1969 He was in Delhi since 1971 as sub-divisional magistrate officer in charge of the judicial collectorate and additional district magistrate In November 1974 he was appointed special assistant to Kishan Chand the lieutenant governor of Delhi As a childhood friend of Sanjay Gandhi Chawla came into the forefront during the emergency and played such an active role that it left his boss in the shadows Personally he is a suave young man short fair and good looking

not Finance Minister C Subramaniam[53] but Minister of State Pranab Mukherjee[54] it was not so much Industries Minister T A Pai[55] but Minister of State A P Sharma and it was not the lieutenant governor of Delhi but his special assistant Navin Chawla, with whom Sanjay dealt

It was certainly not Jagjivan Ram Y B Chavan or Swaran Singh who could be drawn directly into the Sanjay orbit but younger ones who had much to aspire for, like D P Chattopadhyay and V C Shukla Above all there was Bansi Lal who became Sanjay s direct lead to the cabinet with his appointment as union minister of defence But nobody could say that Bansi Lal was appointed to the vital post in one of the three most senior ranks in the cabinet (along with external affairs and home) unless Mrs Gandhi wanted it

[53]Sixty seven year-old C Subramaniam s past reads like a most distinguish ed one in the political field He was actively involved in the freedom struggle as a student and went to jail thrice—in 1932 1941 and in the Quit India movement against the British in 1942 He was a member of the constituent assembly in 1946 and of the provisional parliament till 1952 after which he plunged into Madras politics and became minister of finance education and law He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1962 From then onwards it has been one long stint in the union cabinet in various important portfolios He was union minister of finance in Indira Gandhi s government till the Congress downfall He managed to survive the new wave An intense individual short dark and clad in a white *dhoti* Subramaniam smiles suddenly when you least expect it.

[54]A journalist and teacher Pranab Mukherjee forty two became secretary of the Bangla Congress—again a group which broke away from the Congress Party—when he was only thirty two The organization of drought relief eradication of illiteracy and other social reform activities have had his active participation He was born in Birbhum in West Bengal but Delhi held the charisma In 1972 73 he became a member of the Congress parliamentary party executive and finally deputy union minister for industrial development in 1973 He is fond of gardening but digging was one thing he conducted with zest under the emergency except that it was for information on those who got away—financially

[55]Fifty five year-old T A Pai from Kanara (Karnataka) joined the Congress in 1952 and after holding various offices on boards and committees on diverse subjects he became managing director and chairman of the Syndicate Bank. He did a remarkable job of making it one of the most forward looking imaginative banking organizations He was member of both the Madras and Mysore legislative assemblies and joined the union cabinet first as minister of railways in 1972 and then as minister for heavy industries in 1973 It was in the latter capacity that he came into clash with Sanjay Gandhi s business interests

It was comparatively easier to manage the states because a pattern had already been evolved by which the Centre had acquired the authority, largely because of Indira Gandhi s personal standing to select the men and have them accepted by the state legislatures Whenever she nominated a person she saw to it that the overwhelming number of legislators supported him said Sathe She might have removed anyone who stood up to her like Bahuguna or Nandini but she saw to it that the next man had the majority in the legislature behind him or her This only confirms how great her capacity for political manipulation was it also confirms her stature, with which she virtually commanded obedience

Only younger chief ministers became acceptable or those who were weak or sycophant enough to operate at Sanjay s level Where they had a direct equation with the prime minister and felt strong enough to rebel against the Sanjay drive, and where she could not persuade them out of office (as was the case with Siddhartha Shankar Ray in West Bengal and Nandini Satpathy in Orissa) a subtle campaign was unleashed to either demean their image or create a dissident group within the party which came to be known as the pre Sanjay faction Even the cabinets were divided clearly in these non conformist states between those who were known as being pro-chief minister and those who were known as pro-Sanjay "Ministers level charges openly and unabashedly against the chief ministers and remain in office It has been openly said that the ministers have to be loyal to the PM and not to their chief minister who has to get only their support observed Dr Parmar,[14] ex-chief minister of Himachal Pradesh He went on to ask sarcastically, Does it mean that the ministers are not to carry out his wishes but run independently?

After he replaced Bahuguna as chief minister in UP and confirmed his rapport with the Centre, Narain Dutt Tiwari told his fellow legislators once ' Even if you are hung upside down you

[14]A distinguished looking grey haired man of seventy-one Y.S Parmar was chief minister of Himachal Pradesh for four terms until he was eased out in 1976 in the drive to bring about a leadership more compatible with the new face of Indira Gandhi Parmar hardly looks or acts offensive but his determined character took him at the age of sixty to a second marriage (after the death of his first wife) with Satyavati Dange, minister in his cabinet, despite a lot of social noise.

can't throw me out If they want to throw me out, you can't help me so why should I bother about you people?

When they made some complaints against a person called Sukhda Mishra, for whom Bansi Lal had managed to get a ticket for the 1974 elections from UP, Tiwari remarked I ve become chief minister because of Sanjay and Bansi Lal, so don t say anything about Sukhda

How did Salazar[87] remain in power so long? asked Sanjay of Shashi Bhushan one day

Bhushan s heart skipped a beat

"He was a professor, an economist and an extremely well read man '

Shashi Bhushan thought that if Sanjay was told that these were the essential qualities for dictatorship he might realize that he could not aspire to be a Salazar himself

But Bhushan was nervous

Sanjay it seems was Indira Gandhi s answer to the ideologues the harassment she felt at being continually pestered her own growing compulsion to show as much achievement and as quickly as possible to offset the effect of the judgement Sanjay was Indira *Gandhi s answer to her guilt*

[87]Antonio d Oliveira Salazar (1889 1970) Portuguese dictator became premier in 1932 and a new Constitution was adopted in 1933 He gave Portugal stability but refused to bow to nationalism in Portuguese Africa and India His long authoritarian rule made him the symbol of iron dictatorship

4 Dark Side of the Moon

A determined old man walked into Bangalore s jail one day in June 1976 He wanted to see Lal Krishan Advani[1] president of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh who was incarcerated there with a hundred other detenues since the bleak dawn of the emergency When Advani appeared before him the man saw a tall, slim distinguished looking and fair Sindhi with very regular features a moustache and a quiet manner which gave nothing away

Well? smiled Advani

I m sixty five' the man burst out I can t stand what she s

[1]Nothing could be more gratifying for a journalist turned politician than to be in charge of the ministry of information and broadcasting where power can be applied to imagination and vice versa Lal Krishan Advani has achieved that difficult aim He was born in Karachi (now in Pakistan) in 1927 worked as a journalist but from 1942 to 1952 organized the work of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh in Rajasthan He joined the Jan Sangh in 1950 and soon rose to the highest echelons as vice president in 1965-67 and all India president of the party in 1973 He was leader of the Jan Sangh in the interim metropolitan council during 1967 71 after which he was elected to the Rajya Sabha He became union minister for information and broadcasting when the Janata government came to power in 1977

doing I've done whatever I wanted to I've nothing more to live for Tell me what to do I m prepared to die I can go and shoot her

'No, said Advani

But the average worker inside the jails was getting impatient There was a growing feeling that the leadership within was becoming complacent and that there were no plans towards a new move

You seem to think there s no need to do anything any more complained Advani s companions in prison

No authoritarian regime had been overthrown by violence thought Advani There was no alternative but to wait for the people to rise

There was so much anger against Indira Gandhi at the time Do you think she might possibly have been assassinated then or if she had managed to scrape back to power later? I asked

Considering the extent to which she had gone she might have perhaps—had this been another country But not in India India is too big and it s not in the temper of the people otherwise it would have happened even earlier Besides the leadership of the political forces opposed to her is positively opposed to this kind of thing also They disapprove of these measures There is too strong a commitment to peace

Yet Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated "

That was at a time soon after partition when the entire country was inflamed But an organized opposition the organized forces now for instance are against this kind of solution to political problems But she s always been saying this or felt it like all dictators She s accused us directly The Jan Sangh was planning to murder me she said This was much earlier Even then we felt that a person as responsible as a prime minister should not make a charge like that So we met her about it some of us She wouldn t say anything She would not substantiate the charge nor resile You can get out of it in a lot of ways if you want to You can say you know that you were misquoted or that two statements were juxtaposed and created the wrong impression but she kept quiet Perhaps she actually believed it, I don t know

But assassination had been in the air and in the prime minister s mind since L N Mishra s death in a bomb blast in January,

an attempt on Chief Justice A N Ray's[2] life some time later, and the fact that Morarji Desai had talked about it just a few hours before he was arrested on the fateful day of 25 June To get rid of a woman who is in power is more difficult than to get rid of a man being in power he said to the correspondent of *L Europeo* an Italian newspaper Desai gave a very graphic picture of the non violent satyagraha they were planning to organize to achieve their objective, but he could not hide his anger,

We want to get rid of her, we want to force her to resign We will settle down and demand her resignation, shouting day and night Even if the police arrests us, canes us, kills us How many of us can they kill? And what will they do with the bodies? To prevent this Mrs Gandhi will have to liquidate us tonight' Desai went on to admit that there probably were people who had intentions to use means more violent than satyagraha and he gave the example of an incident which sounded remarkably similar to that which happened to Advani But the old man who visited Advani in 1976 in Bangalore was from the south, one thousand miles away from India s capital whereas Desai described a man from the north, a strapping Sikh who had felt sufficiently incensed even as far back as 1973 He came to me and told me

I am already old sixty years old my life has been finished At the last I would like to do a service for my country I would kill that woman before she completely ruins India But for this I need your authorization because I want that after I kill her a just man should succeed her Throughout hours recounted Desai

I explained to him that he could never get this authorization from me, that I would always object to this solution that I would take a stand against violence that is murder He kept (shaking) his head and repeated 'Allow me to do this I hope nobody will ever do it said Desai then added 'But if somebody did it, how could I prevent it?

Barely three weeks after Desai and others had been clamped into jail as he had expected Mrs Gandhi stated that ' democracy is not abandoned only derailed ' although she attributed the

[2]A N Ray sixty five got a controversial leap to the supreme status in law as the chief justice of India by superseding senior supreme court judges Grover Hegde and Shelat in April 1973 He was judge of the Calcutta high court and judge in the supreme court before attaining the last coveted post which he held till 1977

reason to the opposition, not to any of her own acts Soon after she said that "the nation was more important than democracy' In fact, the *National Herald* the daily paper started by Jawaharlal Nehru and patronized by Indira Gandhi—and therefore pre sumed to reflect her views particularly during the emergency—came out with an editorial which praised the one party system in African states like Tanzania as being no less virile than the multi party system 'The Westminster model need not be the best model and some African states have demonstrated how the people s voice will prevail whatever be the outward structure of democracy By stressing the need for a strong Centre the PM has pointed out the strength of Indian democracy A weak Centre threatens the country s unity integrity and very survival of *freedom She has posed the most important question If the* country s freedom does not survive how can democracy survive?

By 25 August the same *National Herald* was earnestly point ing out that the PM has made it clear in recent days that there will be no attempt to establish a one party system in this country and that she is not thinking in terms of a constituent assembly or a new Constitution As far as the party system is concerned the one party system however well it might answer needs theore tically will not be forced it can come about only in the course of natural evolution and at present there is no such prospect

What happened between 11 July and 25 August?

Mujib s[3] assassination said L K Advani 'That gave her a shock I think Perhaps she came to the conclusion that the kernel of democracy should be maintained

I want to meet the leader of the underground workers rang P N Singh [4] Congress member of the metropolitan council

[3]Mujibur Rahman the creator of Bangladesh As leader of the Awami League in Pakistan a series of abortive attempts to negotiate a greater autonomy for East Bengal led to a unilateral declaration of autonomy on 15 March 1971 Pakistani repression resulted in a subcontinental conflagration in which India emerged victor and Bangladesh the new country Only three years later in August 1975 the *Banga Bandhu* as he was affectionately called was slain in a gruesome massacre involving almost his entire family

[4]P.N Singh was born in Ballia (UP) in 1937 He joined the Students Congress at sixteen and arrived finally in Delhi in 1958 His politics was straight clean and simple as was his personality It was Congress all the way

their other contacts were Singh even got a bit suspicious but he told them all he knew The man with them was in control of the entire underground movement in Delhi so nothing could go wrong he thought They decided to meet finally at the liaison man s house to get the money

It was the night of 6th August—9 pm Singh had a friend—Kulwant Kumar Gupta—with him It was raining when they reached the posh locality of Maharani Bagh, where the liaison man lived

They got off from the taxi in front of the house It was dark There were no lights outside Singh felt uncomfortable He thought there was a man shadowing them He tried to shake off the feeling The leader could not have introduced them to a wrong man They entered the house The man was sitting alone in the spacious richly furnished drawing room Singh again became suspicious when a bearer entered carrying tea in a tray He looked like a policeman in plain clothes with the typical short hair cut and a smart stance Then the leader arrived Singh relaxed He introduced his friend They again went into details about all the people who would be involved and again about those in Rampur and Terai and Lucknow Then the liaison man took out ten thousand rupees in fresh notes He handed over five thousand Send somebody tomorrow for the rest he said Singh wondered why he did not give the entire amount Perhaps he was testing them he thought but he felt uncomfortable All four took a taxi to Lhasa The leader went off to attend a meeting That set Singh wondering again The liaison man Singh and his friend Kulwant, stayed on to have dinner They talked until midnight

Singh reached home at 12 30 am not daring to admit his suspicions even to himself Seconds later there was a knock He was half expecting it So his suspicions were correct he thought to himself He saw a deputy superintendent of police and two station house officers of the area around Sarojini Nagar where he lived He knew them well They looked apologetic

Chaliye Singh *Saheb* (Come Mr Singh)

You needn t have taken the trouble You could have just rung me up Singh answered

Kulwant had been arrested as well but they did not tell him

They took Singh away in style with a jeep carrying the red

"What did you do between the 12th and the 25th of June? How did you feel? ' they asked him

"Mrs Gandhi should have resigned That would have been better for the government and the party Not doing so has harmed the party '

The four of them kept on asking the same questions over and over again When one of them would finish and Singh would answer another would start then the third then the fourth, then back again to the first the econd, the third and the fourth It took four hours Then they pushed their chair back and got up *Ichha* (alright) Mr Singh we ll meet again they said

Hardly had they stepped out of the door when four more men walked in They were from the intelligence bureau Pulling up the chairs they began Now then Mr Singh

They asked the same questions the same way One at a time till the fourth man, then back again Singh s answers became more and more mechanical She ought to have resigned It would have been good for the party Not doing so has harmed the government and the party She ought to have resigned it would have been good for the party Singh began to feel sleepy They gave him some tea Now then Mr Singh where were you born? Where were you educated? How did you meet Chandra Shekhar? What are your contacts with Jayaprakash Narayan? What did you do between the 12th of June and the 25th? How did you feel?

She ought to have resigned I told you I felt she ought to have resigned Singh kept on answering It would have been good for the party it would have helped the government

Suddenly they shot a new question What relations have you with Jagjivan Ram?

That woke Singh out of his growing stupor

I know him as a leader of my party Al o we have a Bhojpuri Samaj of people from eastern UP and Bihar He was president I was the secretary

They asked him about his meeting with Jagjivan Ram on the 26th morning He told them how he had met him and what he had said

No that s not true they said in a chorus He said As long a Indira Gandhi Sanjay and Barooah are alive democracy

cannot be restored So whatever money you want, I'll arrange it That s what he said

"No you're lying!" shouted Singh

' We have a tape

'Let me listen to the tape then I ll agree

"You had better repeat what we are saying otherwise your family, your children, everything will be ruined '

' No! It s a lie!

' If you say it we can take you to Mrs Gandhi and you can have whatever political advantage or position you want If you accept this, it ll be very helpful to her and you can have anything you want

No no "

The results will be bad We ll have to apply third degree methods on you

I don t care, said Singh

They had been gruelling him for four hours

They got up, pushed their chairs back, and said, ' *Achha*, Mr Singh we ll meet again '

In came a third group another batch of four Singh had recognized some of the earlier men He did not know a single one of the new ones Both earlier groups had asked him who his friends were in the police the IB or RAW When he mentioned the names of his friends in RAW to the third batch of men, they began to look at each other Singh immediately began to suspect their identity It was the same round again the same questions, and the three groups in succession, for twenty four hours He was too sleepy He stopped wanting even tea He hadn t bathed washed or been to the bathroom since they had brought him there

At 2 pm he was taken to court where the police charged him with being involved in a conspiracy He got a remand for four days They brought him back to the same room Again began the same round By the third evening they lost their patience You won t listen they said so we ll have to do something They made him stand against the wall The batch of four would change but they would keep sitting They kept him standing for nine hours Then suddenly six floodlights of 1 000 volts each were switched on around him, focussed on his eyes For one idiotic moment Singh thought they were going to take

a photograph, but his eyes shut automatically in the glare As soon as that happened he felt an electric shock in the feet from the wiring under the carpet, which they began to manipulate His eyes opened with a jerk, only to feel the glare of the lights As soon as they d shut the electric shock would run up through his feet Within five minutes he was perspiring profusely The torture was so intense that he began shouting ' Let me be! Kill me if you like! Then the lights went off The electric shocks stopped There was pitch darkness Suddenly he heard the wierdest of sounds strange eerie noises which seemed to touch raw nerves in his brain He felt his head would explode His body began to shake, he fell on the floor, and began to writhe in agony He thought he would go mad with those sounds He thought he was going to die He almost fainted

Then it stopped The ordinary lights went on The gang of four came in

"Mr Singh get up

He could not

You have to accept what we say otherwise we ll have to go on like this

He managed to mutter Well then go on I ll go on as long as I can '

Alright, think it over ' they said and left

There was a reprieve He was offered some lunch

"No ' he said ' I want a bath

He was blindfolded and taken to a filthy bathroom then brought back Four more days of questioning followed but no torture of the earlier kind He refused to fall in with their demands Finally, an officer from RAW—"I know he was from RAW because the guards on duty outside told me later said Singh—shouted the warning We are the servants of that *Devi* (goddess) If you don t listen we ll do what the Pak army did in Bangladesh We ll get your wife and your sisters and rape them in front of you!

Singh lost control of himself He picked up a chair and threw it at the man Immediately other officers came rushing in offering apologies 'He should not have said such things We ll take action against him ' It was all a strategy Singh knew In fact he thought there was a glass panel in the wall from which they must have been watching his reactions. They let him sleep that night

After that they took him to Rampur where they got hold of all the people Singh had talked about in Lhasa restaurant They tried to prove that he had bought arms to kill Mrs Gandhi at Jagjivan Ram s behest *they took him to Terai Lucknow every* where they played a cat and mouse game with him alternating between keeping him in comfort at a rest house and leaving him for a night in a rat infested cell We ll talk to you about politics tonight, they would say in despair, in an effort to make him commit himself

Do you think Mrs Gandhi s regime will ever end? they would ask trying to intimidate him The army and the police and India s *janata* (masses) are with her None of them is protesting Why don t you cooperate with her?

She won t be in power for more than a year and a half," Singh would reply She s constantly harping upon wanting democracy That means she s frightened of being a dictator If she wants to stick by the Constitution she ll have to go in for the elections some time or the other As soon as that happens, she ll be out If she declares herself a dictator, she can t last long either Even a dictator has to be popular or have a cause She has neither now She ll be assassinated One of you will do it What do you think? Even your own boys and girls in the universities don't agree with you!

We have to do our job they said helplessly in weaker moments They also thought he was relenting

Back in Delhi *they took him to the court again* *Well?'* asked the magistrate Have you found any proof?

It s for the nation s security said the police There are VIPs involved'

The magistrate looked upset

I ll tell you said P N Singh abruptly They ve given me a hero s role They ve made out a plot about Jagjivan Ram They want me to admit to it Do give them as much time as they want

Back at Red Fort *he got really alarmed for the first time* A senior police officer of the CID confided to him ' They are planning to arrest your wife and two uncles tonight Don t tell anyone that you know You should accept You should say it's all correct

Singh said he would think about it He felt shattered He was

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convinced they meant it He remembered how some people had broken into his house and ransacked it even before the emergency His wife had fainted and the children were left crying A witness had said they were Arjun Das men The situation now was even worse and Arjun Das still had his knife into him Singh visualized his wife—a simple domesticated woman—in jail, and trembled with fear and anger

"I can help you,' said the CID man Just ring up your wife and say she should give up the revolver

Singh realized they must have planted it there already They gave him the telephone He found a way out by speaking to her in the Bhojpuri dialect He told her they were pressurizing him to implicate himself

Don t get taken in! shouted his wife shrilly Don t agree There s no such revolver here

The police came rushing to him ' Talk in Hindi they said desperately 'We can t understand

The next day was 15 August the day of India s independence The ghastly news of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman s murder flashed across the world Singh immediately sensed a palpable change in the atmosphere Everybody looked chastened The sub inspector said to him fearfully, ' She's going to be killed too Mujib is finished with all his family The emergency will go also

Another sub inspector who replaced the earlier one on duty asked Singh Are they going to arrest Babuji?

"Possibly

' I want to warn him '

' Why? '

'I am also from the scheduled caste '

Singh told him to meet an SP who was close to Jagjivan Ram But there was counter vigilance even over the guards for they got to know that the sub inspector had visited the superintendent of police Next morning he came to Singh again and said he wanted to meet Jagjivan Ram himself Singh gave him the name of Ram s secretary The sub inspector met Indira Gandhi s defence minister and found the next day that he had been called to the head quarters for a reprimand He was taken off Singh s duty

But the same morning the CID and IB officers came to Singh You ll be glad to know that the aspect about Jagjivan Ram is going to be deleted in the charges against you '

'You got it in, you re welcome to take it out Singh replied laconically But a tremor ran through his body He thought he could face whatever else was in store for him but this had been a close shave

On 13 April 1976, the demolition squads of the DDA descended upon Turkman Gate with the fury of 5th century Hun invasions

It didn t happen slowly, said Hafiz Mohammad Yunus, a Congressman of the area—thin, sixty, and bewildered It just happened One moment we had houses, families jobs dignity, self respect The next moment, there was nothing'

The 300 year old buildings of Turkman Gate—at least some were that historic—and families that trace their descent from the Mughals stood as both a physical and cultural link between old and new Delhi What happened at Turkman Gate became the watershed between the first half of the emergency and the second It closed the gap between subterranean terror and open cruelty It was the first incident after the promulgation of the emergency which involved violent repression of people s anger It epitomized all the problems that became issues of crisis overtaking Mrs Gandhi and the Congress—the alienation of the minorities the basic resistance of a conservative society to something like family planning and the inhumanity of the methods employed the involvement of Sanjay the misuse of MISA the threats and the lack of understanding and the sheer cultural callousness which guided people who were otherwise sensitive, otherwise receptive, and otherwise imaginative—like Indira Gandhi herself

It was as if the emergency too was double-faced The discipline stability, higher production, punctuality, hard work, bigger foreign exchange reserves and twenty five point programme were like a satin cloak all shimmering gloss and soft smoothness but hiding a body full of sores and gaping wounds A bride groom sterilized a teacher driven to suicide a family made homeless, a prisoner without redress, a business gone bankrupt the income tax raids that became political the torture of party colleagues and old associates, the filthy tortuous intrigues, and the conspiracies to destroy, to demean, humiliate,

and ultimately deaden the nerve centres of society [5]

In fact there were two faces of society itself during this period There were those who suffered and were full of fear and there were those who did not suffer and did not know There was hardly anyone who knew and did not suffer, except Mrs Gandhi who saw it all happening before her very eyes—like Turkman Gate which she saw but did not seem to care

We re demolishing only up to there,' said a DDA official pointing out the line to Hafiz Mohammad

' But they ve gone further cried Hafiz Mohammad

The man got up to see and shook his head The building came tumbling down Take that woman to the hospital he said pointing to a young woman with a new born baby who was left lying on the street without a roof over her head

On 14 April there were a row of private houses left in one line—some rich elaborate airconditioned and large others small dirty uncomfortable but *pacca* (made of brick and mortar) These were no *jhuggis* (shanties) or *jhuggiwallas* (shanty dwellers) but everybody was nervous They had not received any notice but they had no confidence left in the procedures of administration They went to the beauteous Rukhsana who had adopted the area for a sterilization drive that had Sanjay raving and the

[5]Several million were sterilized during this period Quotas were fixed for each state Exorbitant incentives were offered to officers who could show the best results The orders went right down from the chief ministers to the *patwari* (revenue official) and the *daroga* (inspector of police) in the villages Each level of administrator felt obliged to prove his efficiency Only numbers mattered not the method Villages in Haryana particularly were surrounded by police and the men forced to undergo sterilization. Buses were off loaded and the men shoved into sterilization camps In some cases doctors were given man after man to operate upon only to learn later that they were prisoners whom the police had rounded up during the night

Similarly the teachers were told to give a quota of cases every month salaries allowances and promotions became dependent on such cooperation In some cases young women teachers from conservative backgrounds committed suicide when they found themselves unable either to talk about the subject, or get the quota

Everything was left to the administrator not to the politician Even the social workers in charge of an area would depend upon the police to intimidate the people Persuasion was at a discount But the ones who did it hated it as much as the ones who suffered There were two forces propelling the perpetrators—fear of losing their jobs and their freedom and the hope of favours from the top

people on the verge of revolt They knew she had only to make one husky call to Navin Chawla and the orders would be revoked But Rukhsana demanded a price

I ll stop them,' she said But you have to do three things Put up a board about Sanjay's programme plant some trees, and give me sterilization cases'

We ll give you 150 ' they said in despair

'That s too little You know I have to show Sanjayji'

Alright *Baji* (sister), but save our houses '

'I ll ask Jagmohan and tell you

That night they met Khurshid Alam[6] You shouldn t worry if she s given the assurance' he said On 15 April they could not meet Rukhsana, and the demolition hordes were invading the area much beyond unauthorized structures or DDA property They went to Subhadra Joshi We re only removing the *jhuggis*, she said They were horrified "Even you are saying that There s no *jhuggi jhonpri* in all of Delhi now, where would you find them here? We are all Congressmen these are our own private houses, all 3 400 of them' She then took a complete list

On 16 April Haji Karamat who was working closely with Rukhsana, advised them to see Mrs Gandhi I know that family he said proudly I have a son who has grown up under their patronage She will definitely listen

The members of the local Congress committee then got together in two buses and went to see the prime minister Let us settle here Our forefathers have made these houses with their sweat and tears They talk as if nothing belongs to us any more

Mrs Gandhi was abrupt and gruff ' If this is the way we keep resettling you how can we make the city beautiful? We can t do anything for you people she said and walked away

On 16 April Karamat told them to go to Dojana House, Rukhsana s family planning camp I ve told her and Jagmohan everything he said

The people were scared They mustered up a crowd of 500 but they were nervous They could be hauled up for sterilization, the operation they all dreaded

[6]With a special interest in road transport books on modern Urdu literature and biographies Khurshid Alam Khan, fifty-eight and from UP became the natural patron of the Jama Masjid residents when he was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1974

"We've brought you 201 cases, *Bīyi*, they said to Rukhsana 'Give us one house for one case

I'll think about it,' she said, all evasive charm

At night, they went in truckloads to meet Arjun Das

'We want time to find another place that s all Give us till the 1st or even till the 29th—you ll find everything vacated

I can t do anything, he said 'That s Rukhsana s area

That night, a friend whom they would not name urged them to send a petition to the PM He promised to see that it was placed right on her table where she would definitely see it They wrote one petition to Mrs Gandhi and the other to Sanjay When they took the papers to 1 Safdarjang Road they saw Mrs Gandhi speeding away in a car They took the petition again at 11 pm when she was expected back It was placed on the table They learnt later from their friend that Sanjay picked it up read it and flung it aside Indira Gandhi picked it up, read it and put it back She then pushed aside the curtain and walked away towards her room The next morning the family went off to Simla

On the 18th a group of four frantic residents went to Jagmohan along with Karamat, who was also the DDA contractor

'If you stick together like this in one area you ll never progress' said Jagmohan

Doesn't matter You please let us stay where we are

Jagmohan flung his spectacles on the table with anger, turned to Karamat, and burst out, I don t want another Pakistan here!

The four of them got so frightened they came away quietly They went to Mir Mushtaq Congress president Barooah who did not even face them and just took the petition saying nothing and then to Subhadra Joshi Just when she agreed to visit the area with them, there came a telephone call, presumably from Barooah they realized, who must have told her what she might expect if she interfered in Sanjay s project Subhadra Joshi came out saying 'I m not really feeling well I don t think I can go"

On the 19th morning the bulldozers swept into the area amidst women wailing, children crying and the stony silence of men And then came a storm of furious protest! A stone flew across, an eighteen year old boy was shot, and pandemonium! The local police came to the residents rescue, especially of young

girls who were pursued, according to accounts given by men and women still shaken by events, by lustful men of the CRP Others who could not escape jumped from rooftops to save their honour Homes were looted a bride s jewellery usurped, and men beaten up inside their houses Women were not only raped, but scarred on their breasts with burning cigarettes

Curfew was clamped

The next day little white slips were distributed to families made homeless for plots of bare land as compensation—fifteen miles away in Khichripur Haji Mohammad Idris whose wife had been beaten up the night before in the crowd, said stonily I had a big house The rooms were airconditioned There was furniture television a refrigerator clothes, possessions

Get an affidavit,' broke in the officer giving the slips

A pall hung over the Muslim world in the entire country An innocuous little item was allowed by censors in the papers but an underground leaflet which reached a few, gave the names of those killed

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi did not visit the area even when she returned from Simla But when Sheikh Abdullah turned up distressed almost immediately thereafter to find out what had happened Mrs Gandhi rang Yunus ' There are so many reports coming Why don t you go and see?

Yes said Yunus the Sheikh has already asked me "

When the two set out to tour the colonies where the Turkman Gate sufferers had been sent off DDA chief Jagmohan accompanied them That must have taken away their credibility immediately But one fact stood out clearly The people uprooted had not been *jhuggiwallas* They were residents and tax payers of an area they had inherited They were not usurpers they had been thrown out with an inhumanity that certainly did not go with a programme of social advancement One of the residents of Khichripur colony accompanied Yunus and the Sheikh to Turkman Gate There they heard of the harassment but the word atrocity was not used They heard of the DDA s 'high handedness but the name Sanjay was not used

'Did you think they would be too frightened to say anything? I asked Yunus

No I thought that just as I tell exactly what I feel about a situation others would do the same Not even a fraction

of what came out later was told to me

"But on that fact finding tour they found that the very man who had offered to show them around had been arrested right from under their nose The Sheikh was furious and went back to Kashmir But Yunus went to the prime minister

' Something must be done about the police there I've already spoken to the lieutenant governor The proof of it was that even our man was hauled up in our presence '

' We must look into it," said the PM

The same evening when she enquired from other people about Turkman Gate Mir Mushtaq tried to shield the police

That man was not arrested! he told her ' He had tripped over my feet, so the police asked him to keep away '

But Begum Fakhruddin had visited the area and found complaints against the same police officer who had behaved so audaciously She told Yunus When he went again to the PM, he burst out, In future I shouldn t be sent to places where I am put in such an embarrassing position There s no action even about one little police officer '

'What am I to do! ' exclaimed the prime minister Look what everybody is saying All three of the individuals actually concerned—Mir Mushtaq the lieutenant governor and the IG police—had told her that there had been no arrest

It was obvious that Mrs Gandhi preferred to believe them aided, no doubt by Sanjay s conviction that a few people dying here or there should not hamper the fulfilment of a project At a seminar organized by Shashi Bhushan, where he had invited Sanjay, the young politico singled out the instance of Prem Sagar Gupta, who had shown the resettlement statistics to P N Dhar, for a sarcastic comment ' He had given piles of notes to the PM s house, said Sanjay ' All were found to be false! ' Obviously, against this background, when a deputation went to President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who was quite shattered by the whole situation, and he complained to the prime minister, she brushed it off by saying that he should not take a communal angle on the affair Nor she made it clear, did she think that Begum Abida s assessments about the resettlement problems were true

Mrs Gandhi had obviously made her choice about whom she wanted to believe

On 10 December 1976 some residents of Jama Masjid were

taken to see an alternate site But as they sat in a jeep with DDA officials and the police, they heard an officer remark "Whoever raises an objection, put him under MISA" The next day 200 women from *Khan Khana Gali* (a lane in Jama Masjid) went to the prime minister with a plea asking not to be shifted ' We have no such programme You can sit calmly, assured the prime minister

Izhar Asar, a writer and social worker of the area, then went to Rukhsana Don t force the people They have got an assurance from the prime minister, so nobody is prepared to leave"

Rukhsana opened a file "Yes, I ve got all the names of the persons who are creating mischief I know the men who sent their wives each one of them They all have to shift Whosoever doesn t will suffer Maman *Saheb* of the DPCC can tell you I took him to Sanjayji—he said in his presence that the police should be used and everybody shifted I told Sanjayji that I ll remove them with affection, not force So please tell them that if they go willingly they'll be at an advantage"

The threats started ' If you don t shift there ll be another Turkman Gate,' the men said

The people mustered up courage yet again, and went to the prime minister You said nothing would be done but they ve already started throwing us out."

She was quiet. "Dhawan *Sahib* is coming you talk to him"

When Dhawan came he told them in front of her, We found out from Mir *Sahib* He said you were going willingly!'

The Mir was writing poetry those days It was coming out in great waves of inspiration, he said

The truth they would not let her know
Who on untruth thrive fatten grow
But she stands for people's glory
And knows full well the true story

It s time the sycophants beware
Or else their deeds would lay them bare.

Nobody told her that the greatest flatterer was the one who told the king that he could never be flattered. Perhaps she liked what the Mir told her Perhaps she had decided not to see through it.

"I wrote to her in 1974," said Radha Raman, that I was her

loyal *bhagat* (devotee) but that loyalty should not be interpreted in the language that had become current then It should not hinge upon one personality, that we should beware of a personality cult Dhawan never even gave her the letter He returned it to me! '

In Dojana House, in one of her evening *durbars* (court sessions), where she gathered all her workers and admirers to go over the day s happenings Rukhsana cooed with suggestive charm You know what I said to Sanjayji today? she asked the men at her feet I said Darling there s a lot of opposition brewing in the city and you know what he said? He said 'Darling you can burn half of Delhi I won t ask you '

Sanjay was ordering officials around that Krishan Chand was a mass of pulp put there by Navin Chawla, the police were at Rukhsana s beck and call even my wife started work in family planning to offset the way Rukhsana was doing it I told her we re trapped in this, why do you want to get into it? We told Indiraji what was happening how can she say she didn t know? I spoke to Sanjay several times about the raids that were conducted and the money collected through pressure He said What proof? What proof can one give like that? It was the style When I said about the demolition he said Keep out of it He didn't do anything on policy without consulting the PM but not on detail She would say Yes And the result was that whatever he said would be done with extra vigour I couldn t match his aggression, the way he talked Yes he said *tu* to me I thought he could be moulded into a good leader That didn t mean he should be the future prime minister The sycophants were gaining ground steadily I admit I didn t have the courage to say I m giving up This was Radha Raman in his seventies being thrown around by a newcomer like Sanjay only because he was the PM s son ' They kept grumbling, this Congress leadership Their fear kept growing but they kept accepting

'Didn t you know what was going on in the country? Why didn t you people go to the prime minister and object? I asked Kamlapati Tripathi as he squatted in his chair with visitors coming in and touching his feet in recognition of his Brahmin origins

I am too confused ' replied the hardened boss of the political world who had managed to survive many a buffeting Tripathi now spoke with great perplexity If one argues to oneself that

the integrity of the country was at stake, that there was foreign money operating and a conspiracy brewing, as in Bangladesh, and that the same thing could happen here, then one wonders what could have happened if the emergency had not been declared If one thinks of what happened afterwards the excesses that were undoubtedly committed, salaries of teachers stopped, whole villages sterilized even young men and old men—of seventy—taken away and people clamped into jail on personal counts then one wonders what would have happened if *this* hadn t happened Whatever it is I feel very sad "

According to Chandra Shekhar the Congress leadership was not just frightened of the wrongs they had committed they were also waiting patiently and giving Indira Gandhi a long rope

When the supreme court upheld Indira Gandhi s election case on 5 November 1975 L K Advani wrote in his diary in jail ' I m praying she does not release us ' They were convinced that if the judgement had gone against her, Indira Gandhi would have taken recourse to drastic action She had made sure, how ever that the judgement should not be hostile She had called an emergency parliament session on 21 July and had the *Repre sentation of People s Act* amended in such a manner that the very grounds upon which Sinha had based his judgement became invalid Along with MISA the *Representation of People s Act* too was made non justiciable

With the danger of being thrown out behind her the opposi tion felt she might relent and release them That she did not do so within even two or three months was her second mistake during that period In November as in June, the opposition had not the ghost of a chance to consolidate their unity and present a viable front It was continued imprisonment The satyagraha movement started then and the solidarity of purpose attained thereby formed the later embryo of the Janata In one week from 16 November to 20 November 175 persons offered satyagraha in Delhi 450 in Punjab 255 in Haryana 360 in Rajasthan, 60 in Himachal Jammu and Kashmir, 1 325 in UP, 1,800 in Bihar 132 in West Bengal, 124 in Assam and Manipur, 103 in Orissa, 360 in Andhra Pradesh, 108 in Tamil

Nadu 540 in Kerala 1 375 in Karnataka 1,430 in Maharashtra, 200 in Gujarat, and 418 in Madhya Pradesh Along with this was the underground movement "We had three objectives, to contact people to print leaflets exposing the tyrannies of the Congress regime, and to give wide publicity to our activities described the socialist leader Brij Mohan Toofan,[7] who took up the organization in the north Delhi, he said was a place hounded by the CID, and very unsafe When leaders began to be arrested the strategy changed and it was decided to send taped messages to the world outside Berlin London and Stockholm,' said Toofan, proved to be very receptive and the news sent encouraged friends to start papers Towards the end of 1975 an attempt was made to send emissaries abroad Forged passports proved handy and they cost only two thousand rupees per piece By January 1976 our resources dried up friends were arrested on the slightest suspicion houses were raided and relatives harassed day and night But Bihar opened a new chapter JP was out of prison We began to take regular advice from him Our underground workers posed as film actors to meet him!

Bulletins called *Satyagraha Samachar Jan Vani Resistance Satya Vasta Mini Motherland, Kranti Doot* and others began to circulate clandestinely giving points for action Remember daily that our leaders are languishing in prison, keep a part of your earning every month as an offering to the nation in its hour of trial spare a member till the present challenge is overcome

Mrs Gandhi s answer was a succession of constitutional and statutory amendments that made her position almost unassailable, and gave her the leeway to operate economic measures to some effect Parliament was made supreme the fundamental rights suspended, and courts stripped off their authority to hear disputes on the election of the prime minister, the president, vice president and Lok Sabha speaker When the supreme court itself upheld the right of Mrs Gandhi s government to imprison

[7]Fifty seven years old Brij Mohan Toofan a fiery socialist, was born in Sialkot He graduated from Delhi University and left for Europe in 1948 to work with the BBC He became a member of the national executive of the Socialist Party in 1955 He has been president of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha in Delhi since 1965 He was elected to the Delhi metropolitan council in 1977 as member of the Janata He is the author of *India s Unfinished Revolution*

political opponents without court hearings, Justice H R Khanna's was the lone dissenting voice which argued for the right to issue a writ of habeas corpus as "one of the most important characteristics of democratic states under the rule of law To the argument that the verdict was legal under the emergency powers granted in the Constitution, Justice Khanna said that 'in the purely formal sense, even the organized mass murders of the Nazi regime qualify as law"

My father and I were amongst the first people to raise their voice against Hitler and Mussolini at a time when in England and America and many of the European countries, there was great admiration for them," said Mrs Gandhi "Many of my personal friends died in concentration camps So I feel more about this "[8]

But this is precisely the point emphasized by the barrage of underground leaflets—the likeness with the Nazi example in creating a constitutional validity for dictatorship By June 1976 the last of the democratic ideals had fallen Elections due in February that year had been postponed, and the life of parliament extended by a year The opposition outside protested feebly that a parliament which did not have the sanction of the people was not legally entitled to pass any amendments to the Constitution

This package deal for authoritarian rule was neatly tied up with control over media Censorship was imposed along with the emergency, and stringently exercised But the creation of a single national news agency by amalgamating four existing ones was a fundamental, structural departure which was not expected to disappear along with censorship once the emergency was lifted—if and when that was to be *Samachar*[9] was not a concept which came only with the emergency but like a number of other measures it took practical shape during a period when opposition from the media itself could not stall its birth Unlike newspapers or magazines which had to publish after pre censorship at one stage and according to guidelines set by the government later, but which also retained independent authority for a more propi

[8]In an interview with D.R. Kronzucker and D R. Scharlan of the North German TV 29 September 1975

[9]An enquiry into the functioning of Samachar was instituted by the Janata government The report is expected to determine its future.

time to consolidate gains, the party organization, and improve the economy And why not a one party system? I'm a *jat* I have done so much in Haryana Give me three years for India and see what I do

"What is your sanction in the Congress Party? It s the people isn t it? argued Sathe If you don t have elections, you ll lose the sanctions Then where will you go? The military?

'Sathe *Sahib military kis ki hai* (whose is the military)? It is the *jat* s and the Sikh s I can control them They can t go against me

'That would be a straight road to the disintegration of the country,' replied Sathe Take Maharashtra It s only twenty five odd years since we became a nation. You go and raise a slogan there like *Shivaji ki jai!*—and no *jats* or Sikhs would be able to help you after that! The army can t hold a country like India

Bansi Lal fell silent, but he kept the issue alive in parliament all the time His attitude tied up with the editorial in the *National Herald*, Mrs Gandhi s own comments on the elections and the fact that he was, almost every evening, at the prime minister s house not sitting with her but with Sanjay, presumably working out a strategy or an action programme for the next day while Dhawan was around as a necessary confidant Mrs Gandhi was not at variance with her son on any of the other matters It is obvious that she was not on this issue either She was letting Sanjay be the instrument of her political moves She was the one with the political mind, not he One can t disregard the influence that his reports would have on her, and in so far as she depended upon the presumed acumen of a non political agent she was bargaining for trouble She was certainly not being led blindly from one authoritarian step to another To interpret it as that would discount the authority and the perception with which she had held the country for ten years

Whenever she has had good advisers ' say some of her colleagues and political analysts she has done well She has no marked capacities of her own "

But the point is, who chooses the advisers? She has not only selected the kind of advisers (or had people functioning as a caucus) who suited the imperatives of the period—her imperatives—but she has also done so in a homogeneous, all-

pervasive way Contrary to the assumption that she did not let a team emerge, Indira Gandhi has always worked with a team The only thing is neither the advisers nor the team has lasted long enough When she wanted the leftists, she had them in every area of functioning, when she wanted them out, they were replaced in all those areas of functioning The advisers and the team she gathered for herself after the emergency had obviously to be people who believed in it, who were not bothered about the niceties of administrative procedure or the conditions of political morality She brought in Bansi Lal as defence minister and Shukla as minister for information She saw Sanjay's autocratic behaviour with Siddhartha Shankar Ray The fact that she let Sanjay operate on such an ever expanding scale even after that, proves that she wanted it that way Why she relies on him or used him that close to the affairs of state continues to baffle some people

'She s not only terribly arrogant but utterly foolish says Vijaya Raje Scindia [10] the former maharani of Gwalior, who also fell victim to the syndrome of harassment, imprisonment, parole, and imprisonment that the emergency brought for the opposition, particularly the Jan Sangh, of which she was a member I was always her follower and accepted her as leader, but she s never been able to distinguish between the genuine and the undependable amongst her supporters Perhaps that's why she trusts only her son"

'Would you as a political mother project your son in this manner?'

"Never If he has it in him he would make it on his own Perhaps

[10]Born in Sagar in 1919 this volatile daughter of a *thakur* family married literally into history The Scindia rulers of Gwalior live in every page of Indian history Their feudal glory finished with the birth of the Indian Republic but the name lived on When His Highness Jivaji Rao Scindia, Vijaya Raje s husband died she could have carried on in the traditions of conservative royal seclusion. But she made a stormy entry into politics and then the Lok Sabha with the Congress in 1957 She went on to become a fine public speaker Her anger with D P Mishra resulted in a break with Congress She took the lead in helping to form the first opposition government in MP in 1967 She became a vociferous member of the Jan Sangh. Hence the imprisonment. The cell amongst prostitutes and murderesses was a far cry from royal comfort but Vijaya Raje s resilience brought her through with equanimity

Sanjay did not have it in him, that is why he needed his mother's assistance at the age of thirty!'

A vibrant and dynamic woman, the *Rajmata* of Gwalior as she is still called informally, voiced the feelings of many who see reasons beyond the political machinations that guided Mrs Gandhi in her attitude to her younger son

I m told he has some secret up his sleeve and that he has kept something abroad, some proof against her which he would reveal if she disowns him I don t know But how else can one explain this strange hold over one s mother?

It s one of those human dramas of the household ' says play wright Balwant Gargi from the point of view of a creative writer who sees beyond the outer facades of power politics She was always dominated by her son By the stories one has heard of Sanjay s childhood—he was so pampered that she would always give in He was a reckless rash driver his delinquency, his arrogance, his rash, irresponsible utterances his moods—all that the mother takes He finally becomes a monster who sucks at her will Look at Akbar powerless from love, before a son who even incites a revolt against him I met her once with my wife for a small exclusive supper at the PM s house I found a tremendous reserve and power in her, but she was so vulnerable The grand children who toddled in tugged at her sari and kept disturbing the conversation Don t mind him he s like a pet ' she said She is so fond and indulgent a typical mother She would probab ly take anything from her son

I would put it at early 1975 when she began to disregard the opinions of her colleagues, said C Subramaniam, her former finance minister In retrospect, I can complain only till after the emergency

After? '

In my view, all sorts of undesirable persons get into positions of real or assumed authority I think one of the reasons she went in for the elections was because she felt this might be the last opportunity to get out of their clutches Even about Sanjay I used to tell her often that he was interfering in government, but she would say 'no not really, these are just stories

Why couldn t she tell him? I asked

This is something between mother and son and other personal matters

"What personal matters?' I insisted as he began to look more and more uncomfortable

"I can t tell I can't go into that"

' Was it some kind of hold he has on her?

"Yes, you can say that It goes back to much earlier than now

Like a number of other Congressmen, Subramaniam says that he too sought to keep a distance from Sanjay "I never received a phone call from him never talked to him My dealings were with her Whatever confrontation there was came over appointments and things like that" Only once did two important persons go to him about a ticklish matter wanting him to discuss it with Sanjay "I said no, said Subramaniam I'll talk to her if anything I don't know whether they came on her behalf or not

How Sanjay's big time deals came to be talked about is typified by a dialogue between two officers One of them was apparently chastized for not being cooperative about a Sanjay contract

"*Aré yaar*, you were a great fool You don t even know how to fix a contract!

' Well, how! ' exclaimed the other

' It s so simple You call for tenders in the usual fashion You open the tenders If the party you want to favour has not quoted the lowest rates, then you can start negotiations You find a snag You negotiate more You can always cut off the party with the lowest rates by saying that it would not be technically advantageous to give the contract to them that they do not have the capacity needed to produce the item, nor the finance Finally you can tell the party you re interested in that it should match the lowest rates

I know all that,' said the other officer dispiritedly

' Then why didn't you do it that way?

' I tried but Sanjay and his party were not interested in matching the lowest rates They wanted the contract but on their rates! How could one fix that?

When it came to the harassment of some officers in the industries ministry a matter associated in the public mind with Sanjay, Mrs Gandhi knew exactly what the position was A starred question on Maruti had to be answered in parliament by T A Pai, the industries minister Sanjay refused to go to the ministry with the required information, so an under secretary and a section

officer went to the Maruti factory The two men came and reported to Krishnaswamy, the director of heavy industries, saying that they were not only refused information, but had been abused by Sanjay as well He filed this and said that the minister should give an answer in parliament, saying that Information will be secured to lay it on the table of the House later Within a few days, Krishnaswamy s house was raided and he was charged under some excise rule or the other for keeping half a bottle of whisky with him! Krishnaswamy is a teetotaller and the bottle was the usual kind that anyone brings off a plane after an air trip Both Pai and Mantosh Sondhi secretary in the ministry, got him off the hook with great difficulty and Pai wrote a note to Mrs Gandhi about it In the process Sondhi came to grief as well He began being followed by a CID car everywhere and charges were drawn up against him on some other count ' That year was hell, recalls Sondhi

Pai had sent Mrs Gandhi a note When Swaran Singh and K C Pant went to plead with her on Sondhi s behalf she would not listen Then went Rajni Patel with all the anger of an old friendship

"He s an innocent man! he exclaimed You can t have him prosecuted on trumped up charges

She relented Alright then she said But tell him to behave

Patel had no direct arguments with Sanjay nor did he see him But V C Shukla urged him to see Sanjay *Dada* said Shukla addressing him by his favourite term you must go and meet him

He s only a friend s son replied Patel I ll meet her not him '

But such were the vagaries of the political climate that it was Rajni Patel who invited Sanjay to Bombay for the latter s first foray as public leader It was not long after that Patel s image was sought to be demeaned and his role as president of the Bombay PCC denigrated because one, that he was a leftist two that he had saved Mantosh Sondhi and three, that he had had three long sessions with Mrs Gandhi on the issue of holding a constituent assembly meeting to draw up a new Constitution and tried to dissuade her from pursuing the move "It would be political suicide for you, said Patel to

Indira Gandhi Sanjay was furious with him, says Patel about this wrong advice' that he had given to the prime minister And soon after, CBI enquiries were instituted against Patel customs files were probed into, bank accounts were seized, and the rumour spread that he had been mishandling party funds

It is obvious that Indira Gandhi was not averse to the idea of convening a constituent assembly Otherwise she would not have discussed it at great length with Rajni Patel On the other hand, when Yashpal Kapoor told her that A P Sharma had called a meeting of sixty or seventy MPs to discuss the issue and have the legislative assemblies of Haryana Punjab UP and Bihar endorse the idea she exclaimed Sharma *kaun hote hain yeh meeting karne w le* (Who is Sharma to call such a meeting!) But the legislative assemblies of Punjab, Haryana, UP and Bihar did pass resolutions in favour of the idea though this happened during Mrs Gandhi s visit to Africa Meanwhile the matter came up for discussion in the parliamentary party executive where they felt that the whole thing was being worked out in a state of panic When Mrs Gandhi returned Sathe was one of the people who went and argued with her about the repercussions As soon as I came down at the airport I was told that these resolutions had been passed she said How do you expect me to react like this?

Sathe argues that Om Mehta and Bansi Lal were behind this move Also Sanjay Their idea was that if the constituent assembly sat for deliberations it would take three or four years so elections would not be held By then the Youth Congress would be in power and could take over the Congress itself But oddly enough Sathe contradicts his own analysis by saying

I may sound cruel but I do think Sanjay is incapable of taking a political view of this nature He s a well meaning boy wi h strong commonsense, but no political knowledge Who was the person then? The only conclusion is that one must substitute Indira Gandhi wherever Sanjay s name comes in, because he was the mask for her other face—the second face

For a long time in the public mind and in that of the Congress party itself there remained the illusion that Mrs Gandhi was innocent of Sanjay s frenetic drives But no matter which sphere one looked into with care there was evidence of her initiative, knowledge and political will Everywhere he seemed to be

running counter to her, but everywhere it was a parallel course Each time he was used as a testing pilot in the political scene It is this point which concerns the theme of this book not his alleged private or monetary scandals It was when she said at the Gauhati session of the Congress that ' an attack on Sanjay is an attack on me, and repeated it in a meeting of Congress workers in Delhi, that the idealistic haze began to clear from the eyes of the Congress leadership

' It was then that people realized that if she were to return to power with the sanction of an election, she would rule with much more ferocity, ' said Chandrajit Yadav

Do you believe so? '

Well her faith in autocratic rule would have been strengthened and Sanjay and Bansi Lal would have been on top

Indira Gandhi was deliberately taking the country towards dictatorial rule but only as far as she was allowed to That is the clue to every contradiction between her words and their con summation or their abortive fate She set up a committee on constitutional amendments under the chairmanship of Sardar Swaran Singh, which got the parliamentary endorsement of the rest of the Congress leadership But she did not go through with the constituent assembly idea because she found too much opposi tion within the party She got in the clause which said that the elections of the prime minister, president, vice-president, and speaker should not go to court, but she did not press with the infamous suggestion that there should be complete immunity for life against any criminal proceedings for the prime minister president, and governors—for acts before or after office

About this even the enthusiastic Margaret Alva was horrified The bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha they were given a three line whip, there were two speeches, they voted and came out Everybody was shocked So Alva went to see the PM She had always given her the feeling that she would listen—once you won her confidence

' Madam, said Margaret Alva to the prime minister, "I am very junior But I had to come to you This thing that we ve voted for, we re all very unhappy I don t know if the others will have the courage to tell you

'Isn t it already there? enquired Indira Gandhi innocently

"What we objected to is the hurried manner in which we were made to do it," said Alva

I'll look into it, said Mrs Gandhi

The bill never went to the Lok Sabha

Yet again, when it had been decided that Chandra Shekhar should be expelled from the parliamentary party executive for his association with JP before the arrests, the party constitution was sought to be changed so that people could be expelled without assigning any reasons for the expulsion V C Shukla and Raghuramaiah were trying to push it through Alva again objected 'Where was the need for you to act so wise? asked Shukla later "What guarantees do you want? If we feel like it we can throw you out of the party without giving any reasons!

"In that case, exclaimed Alva angrily, "Why don't you throw the Constitution out? Why do you have to show people you have amended it! '

Where Mrs Gandhi thought they were going too far, she would retract a bit When Om Mehta and Raghuramaiah went to her about increasing the term for parliament to seven years she exclaimed, "I don t like it! Then it was decided that it should be extended to six years Alright but don t come to me and say next year that you want to increase it to eight years" said Mrs Gandhi

Had the Congress leadership decided that they would not allow this steady emergence of a powerful one-woman rule they could have stopped it But the emergency had given too much of a shock to the senior leaders, while the younger ones were products of a Congress Party which had not had its own elections in years 'Always some reason or the other was brought forth ' said Chavan "The general trend looked like drift' But in the light of later events it is obvious that Mrs Gandhi established her control over the organization in much the same way as she later held her cabinet captive Nominated party officials were a certain guarantee of personal allegiance They were all using Sanjay as a means to be in the inner circle but they became so servile that they never let Mrs Gandhi know how unpopular she was becoming

There was one point about which Mrs Gandhi was also genuinely in the dark—and that was about the image of Sanjay She was not allowed to believe that the initial curiosity which

brought the crowds to him had waned and the big shows that each state organized relied on money fear and the emergency

Sanjay s whirlwind tours of the states began with Sita Ram Kesri calling him to Bihar on 12 September 1975 I took him to Sadaquat Ashram without an escort said Kesri He was not accorded VIP treatment at that time It was natural to ask him The sons and daughters of the great have always been called upon to give away prizes, or perform functions for charity But I was also very impressed with his views I thought he could stand against the caucus that was already around her at the time Kesri was of course referring to the leftists

You know how it all began ' said Dhawan The chief minister of Punjab invited him to Fazilka So Bansi Lal imme diately wanted to organize a big welcome for him in Haryana It was a competition I told him not to My instinct told me that the PM didn t like these things I know the way her mind works

There was no stopping the gathering momentum But from the very beginning ministers and chief ministers flocked around Sanjay on every visit From Delhi to Chandigarh to Vishaka patnam down south it was—

> Sanjay Gandhi said youth must root out social evil- He was accompanied by the union minister for works and housing
>
> Mr Sanjay Gandhi said work not isms were needed to carve out a better future for India He was accompanied by the union minister of
>
> Sanjay Gandhi gave the five point programme plan of action at Bangalore—he was welcomed by Chief Minister Dev Raj Urs

In Andhra Union Minister Raghuramaiah paid such fullsome tribute that it embarrassed even his colleagues ' I have served two generations of Nehrus, I ll be happy to serve the third '

By 31 October 1976 Chief Minister S B Chavan in Bombay dispelled any illusion that Sanjay was being welcomed only as the voice of youth He is a leader of the people crowed the veteran politician

In West Bengal in a ten hour trip to Calcutta the crowds began chanting in rhythmic frenzy *Sanjay Zindabad Sanjay*

Zindabad! Chief Minister Ray wrote to Mrs Gandhi saying it was a phenomenon.'

Dev Kanta Barooah s advocacy was the strongest because it came under the garb of reasoned comparison

'How old was Maharaja Ranjit Singh when he became the king of Punjab? Eighteen! How old was Shankaracharya when he died? How old was Swami Vivekananda when he died? Thirty nine! How old was Akbar when he conceived the idea of a cosmopolitan empire? He was merely in his teens In this country lots of things have been done by young people and a lot of mischief has been done by the old.'

In fact most of the circle close to Mrs Gandhi was fed so well on the growing charisma of her son that those who described it to her began to believe it themselves

You know that story from the *Puranas*? ' asked Sita Ram Kesri " A Brahmin *devta* (god) was carrying a little goat Five dacoits wanted to steal it from him but they thought that if they caught him near the village, there would be a hue and cry So they stationed themselves one by one at a distance of a mile each

What is this you are carrying sir? asked one thief. A little goat said the Brahmin "No no this is a puppy, said the thief At the second mile the other thief exclaimed ' What a lovely puppy you have sir! No laughed the Brahmin, it s a little goat When the third thief at the third milestone exclaimed ' Why don t you let me have this puppy it s so beautiful! the Brahmin was angry but he started feeling uneasy At the fourth milestone the thief said Where are you carrying this beautiful little puppy? ' The Brahmin thought he was going mad At the fifth milestone, when he was accosted by the fifth thief who said how beautiful the puppy was he had started believing by then that it was a puppy and having no use for a puppy, he just handed it to the thief in disgust and walked away How can you blame Indiraji? This is what happened with her She had to believe he was great

I told Vidya Charan (V C Shukla) not to play up Sanjay too much said Madhya Pradesh leader Arjun Singh[11]

[11]Arjun Singh forty seven made a mark in Madhya Pradesh Congress politics He became agriculture minister in 1967 then minister for planning and development and finally minister for education in 1972 He is now leader of the Congress opposition in Madhya Pradesh

"Indiraji could always right a wrong if she saw it I feel that she is basically very humane, rational, and sensitive For the rank and file of Congressmen the evil lay much nearer home"

Indira Gandhi was the prime minister, but she was also a mother She apparently told K D Malaviya, probably when he tried to point out some of Sanjay's lapses, "*Behad pyar hai us se* (I love him too much)" There was a story going the rounds told by another former minister of her cabinet, that in a discussion in Sanjay's presence about the crisis that led to the emergency, Mrs Gandhi took both Sanjay's hands in her own and said, "These are the strong hands which saved me It was not strange, therefore, for her to think that Sanjay could inherit the Nehru mantle

In recognition of Sanjay's growing role in politics, to further his prospects and to give the official stamp of approval to his tours, Congress President Barooah dashed off letters to chief ministers to accord him all the facilities and the respect during his visits To prove their vehement acknowledgment of his crowd drawing capacity, they said he should be provided security Verbal instructions were then given by the prime minister's secretariat to the intelligence bureau Chief Security Officer Lobo issued instructions to the special branches—the subsidiary intelligence bureaux in different towns—in charge of various regions These instructions were meant for the guidance of police authorities Contrary to the general impression, Sanjay was given security on par with that provided for chief ministers For the chief ministers there is no escort car but a pilot car, for one thing, but the security for the prime minister is totally different even from that for the president

Narain Dutt Tiwari, UP chief minister, was a typical example of a man who talked rationally, but behaved like a knight in shining armour in the employ of 1 Safdarjang Road Why did he so overreach himself?

There was a circular letter from Barooahji from the AICC that we must do everything for Sanjayji So when he came to UP, I accompanied him everywhere Later on another letter said Indiraji had said we should not receive him at the airport But we were told that he was a crowd catcher, so we must be with him Even he protested that he didn't want any government help, but everything was being done for him It was in

the papers, on TV She knew everything

Did you think it was right?

"Theoretically perhaps not, but practically, well—one had to '

'Were you afraid?'

Tiwari was silent

"Didn t you know that things were going wrong that there was resentment among the people that the Congress was being destroyed?"

"My God, you don t take me to be like Pai and the others, and absolve myself I don t want to say anything that will hurt her

But isn't there a moment when the country or the party can mean more than the individual? What do you go by? I insisted

Loyalty,' said Tiwari simply

Brahmananda Reddy, with everything in his past to make him proud, and everything during the emergency to make him want to forget— poor fellow,' said a colleague he had no standing at all. He has his own grudge against Mrs Gandhi — goes to the root of the matter, like an experienced Congressman

The decline began over the years When one person becomes too big the others suffer in consequence We must have, at the all India and state level, people of stature who can be considered leaders in their own right If you merely appoint a politician, then he can act only as an administrator The people must feel he is elected, only then will he owe responsibility to the people We discussed this in private talk but not in the PCCs, or emphatically at forums"

Why?'

Maybe there was too much awe maybe too much fear, maybe too much emotion—it was a combination Maybe there was euphoria "

'But that was only for a short time,' I said

'Oh no! exclaimed the crafty Reddy 'It lasted long enough!

Why didn t you protest during the emergency if you felt there were wrongs being done?

Why should I have allowed myself to be put in an embarrassing situation? I never met Sanjay Gandhi I never went out of my way to meet Mrs Gandhi I said what I wanted to on files I didn t want to get into that There may have been several Om Mehtas or something, but *they* never told me to do anything

'But you were involved in the governance of the country at a crucial period I said

I never did anything I felt I shouldn t do but I remained aloof, argued Reddy, and went on to give a classic description—*I was like a lotus in the pond*

So it seems was the rest of the Congress leadership Except that some were getting their bottoms dirtied

On 18 January Indira Gandhi announced the elections

She had to do it, both from an inner compulsion and from outward necessity Very typically she did not consult the chief ministers her cabinet the home minister nor even as he indicated later President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed She had tried to combine dictatorship with democracy It didn t work There were rumblings beneath the calm The Congress was in a coma, but a people were on the move

Even Bhave[12] who was called the official saint because of the support he lent to the emergency and who had issued his famous edict—*Anushasan Parva* (discipline is need of the hour)—during his year of silence, had been urging for its end since June 1976 Bhave in fact had supported Mrs Gandhi to the extent of suggesting before 25 June 1975 that she could deal with Jayaprakash Narayan with severity for leading a movement towards anarchy The same Bhave was himself dealt with harshly only six months later Then he gave the counter call to lift the emergency An underground leaflet described it vividly

> On 11 June the police raided Vinoba Bhave's *ashram* and carried out an intensive search 250 copies of Bhoodan literature (copies of Maitreyi) have reportedly been seized This was to warn Vinoba Bhave and his followers not to meddle in the affairs of MAD (Madam Dictator) when they have their meeting in July next Thousands of enraged followers were kept at bay by the police during their search

[1] Vinoba Bhave eighty two years old co-worker and disciple of Mahatma Gandhi became the leader of the Bhoodan movement to donate land to the poor It was a revolutionary concept in social responsibility He is also founder leader of Sarvodaya the movement for selfless service A thin bespectacled man he maintains a severe ritual of fasting and penance and is accepted as philosopher and savant

Mrs Gandhi was on a trip to the Soviet Union at the time When Kesri met her on her return he told her about the incident She said she had not known about it and was most upset She said the states operated on their own and when people asked they said the orders were the prime minister s By September Bhave was so disturbed about the continuance of the emergency that he went on a fast, with the ban on cow slaughter the issue A group of MPs met Sanjay as part of the strategy to influence Mrs Gandhi

'We can t let him die, they said

Any old man gives a threat should we surrender? said Sanjay as callously as ever We may as well surrender the government Let him die! '

' He is not any old man the MPs replied In this country only two people have ruled the *rajah* (king) or the *rishi* (saint) In a clash the *rajah* will always lose

No ' said Sanjay mummy will look after it

Nirmala Deshpande Bhave s secretary tried to soften Bansi Lal s attitude but he too was adamant Lots of old men have died We made a mistake by surrendering to Morarji when he fasted in Gujarat We are not going to repeat the mistake

When a delegation met the PM she showed concern In fact she conveyed a message very subtly to Bhave two months later without necessarily committing herself It was 21 December when Kesri called on her at her office in South Block and told her he was going to visit Bhave Without saying that it was meant specifically for Bhave she said How long can one delay the elections?

"When I met Vinobaji on the 23rd I wrote him a little note—he was still observing silence—saying that the elections were round the corner He had been very unhappy It was obvious that Indiraji was not influenced by Sanjay because he didn't want the elections at all

' Two days before the announcement, Sanjay told me there would be no election! said Tiwari I was against holding them also Not because I am against democracy but because this was no time We started the kind of measures people long for, but they were not the kind of things to do in a parliamentary democracy It was like having a patient for treatment who has to have a course of twelve injections You give him eight very painful ones. Then

suddenly, when there are only four left to go, you leave it to the patient to vote for the rest Will he opt for them? Of course not He ll say, 'I ll try homoeopathy or some other medicine I don t want this painful thing' We were not ready for the elections at all"

The PM asked me in as early as December, when I returned from a trip to the US what I thought about the prospects of an election,' recalled Sathe Even then she eemed to know the position clearly She said she was a bit afraid about UP and the northern states She knew what she was going in for I think she was so entrapped by a succession of events that this was the only way to break out of it and bolster the democratic forces'

That would be taking too romantic a view of a woman used to hard, calculated gambles She was definite about what she wanted Indira Gandhi wanted a sanction for her style a political legitimacy for her son, and uninterrupted opportunity to rule the way she wanted to If she could show that she could win even after a period of authoritarian rule—which no country had ever done before or been given the opportunity to do so either—she would not have to suffer criticism from home or abroad If she won she would get rid of the group (which Sathe likes to term as Frankenstein) that had formed around her That would be nothing new She would rid herself of them as she had rid herself of the others, once their relevance to her political imperatives was over

She had let the palliatives start functioning Jayaprakash was released in November 1975 itself then Charan Singh then Biju Patnaik,[13] and then others in driblets Talk of negotiations began in March 1976 between the Congress and the opposition but did not fructify because she did not want them to It was a strategy to weaken the opposition Their morale was low, although Jayaprakash Narayan was being allowed to work out moves to form a single party She reasoned that in any case they

[13]Bijoyananda Patnaik better known as Biju Patnaik cam into politics with a reputation for adventure—flying Indonesian leader Sultan Sutanfyahrir away from the very nose of the Dutch during their war He landed the first plane in Kashmir during the Pakistan invasion He was an enterprising industrialist before he took on the additional adventure of politics as chief minister of Orissa in 1961 63 He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1972 and is now union minister for steel and mines in the Janata government Tall, suave dynamic and changeable

would not be able to challenge the organized might of the Congress, loaded as it was with funds and obedient workers

In May 1976 Yunus told her that censorship was proving unproductive She agreed, but nothing happened In July again he argued for it and wrote an exhaustive note In a meeting called to discuss this in which all the officials involved were present, Shukla said he would issue guidelines before going on his scheduled trip to Canada and lift it on his return When he did return, he freed only foreign censorship Yunus made it clear that he thought it ridiculous to penalize our own newspapermen and let the others have the advantage Mrs Gandhi said she agreed with Yunus But as always, the outcome was different Censorship was not lifted till the elections were announced

According to intelligence reports, she had a fair chance of getting 280 seats, with a good harvest in tow It seemed worth it She was *confident in her faith in the masses, while one reason* for her electoral challenge was her belief that Sanjay could make it He had been against the elections, but not against standing for them

Sensitive to the political atmosphere in the beginning of February, Yashpal Kapoor said to Sanjay ' *Bhaiya*, don't stand for the elections

'Why? said Sanjay I can only lose

That's not the way to think about it If you want to come into parliament we can bring you even in a bye election'

' But why shouldn t I?

' Last time they picked on Maruti, but there was the Indira wave, so nothing happened This time they ll pick on mother and son and the wave is not there

On 15 February, before going to Rae Bareli Kapoor asked the PM, 'What have you decided about Sanjay? I ve told him not to stand

No ' said Mrs Gandhi he feels there are so many charges against him, he wants to be in a position to answer back "

In February itself, Dhirendra Brahmachari whom Sanjay relied on greatly, also told him not to stand

' How are you saying this? remonstrated the stubborn young fellow What do you know about *rajniti* (politics)?

'I am telling you what the people are saying, said the

Brahmachari If you get angry, I'll just take my robes and walk away, what is it to me?

Indira Gandhi got her son in at the last minute to stand from Amethi, a constituency adjoining hers in Rae Bareli The feeling of some members of parliament that she would not mind if Sanjay lost sprang more from a desperate idealism than from a realistic assessment of her involvement They hoped that she would disassociate herself from him so that they could have a talking point during the campaigning

When the tickets were to be distributed the prognostications about the conquering spree of the Youth Congress proved correct, much to the chagrin and horror of the older leadership Ever since the Gauhati session where the PM had acknowledged that youth had stolen our thunder the main Congress Party had become nervous Various criteria were discussed all of which amounted to giving the Youth Congress a boost at the cost of the tried and the experienced

When Bimal Sharma the aspirant from Bihar went to Jagjivan Ram for help to get a ticket, Ram was very sarcastic I m sorry he said Last time I was Congress president, A P Sharma was PCC president so I couldn t give it to you at that time Now I can t do anything at all You know Sanjay ask Mrs Gandhi, Bansi Lal, Bihar s chief minister Jagannath Misra, Sita Ram Kesri They can give it to you, not me

Jagjivan Ram s patience exploded when the Youth Congress demanded 200 seats He realized that his supporters would be cleverly denied their strength in the next parliament that he himself was being humiliated beyond endurance, and that he had no future in the Congress The emergency was still on He told Mrs Gandhi quietly on I February, that it should be lifted She mumbled evasively that she would have the home ministry look into it The next day Jagjivan Ram did not just leave the Congress, he slipped out of her hands He formed, along with Bahuguna and Nandini Satpathy, a rival Congress for Democracy, and waited calmly for an exodus from the Congress

That brought the entire citadel of Mrs Gandhi s emergency tactics tumbling down Three factors became immediately perceptible She had to woo the old leadership and give them back their voice in party affairs, she had to soften her own approach, and she had to do something about Sanjay By then

the newspapers in their recaptured freedom were running riot But with truth The stories were right off the oven as it were—hot with people s anger They revealed the dark side of the emergency for the first time Contrary to her expectations the opposition leaders had joined together in record time largely because of the unity forged in prison The people came to the Janata rally in a spirit of spontaneous homage to those who had suffered in jail At the Congress rally the crowds were there, but cold When Jagjivan Ram walked out of the Congress the people felt they could walk out of their fear as well That day, the Congress was doomed

Madame the IB chief D Sen is supposed to have told the prime minister I m afraid you re going to lose '

Sanjay s campaign in Amethi was typically lordly and aliena ted the villager much more than he realized I saw him doing a *padyatra* (walking tour) in a Muslim village He looked embarrass ed and strode at such a pace that the people were left standing and staring The day Jagjivan Ram addressed a meeting in Amethi, there was a clash between Sanjay s men and the armed constabulary of the UP police When the policemen marched in fury to *gherao* him in the resthouse at Gauriganj where he was staying Sanjay flew into a panic and rang Om Mehta for help That is when the border security force chief Ashvini Kumar s men rushed to his rescue to find that he was not too kind to them either As a last resort Mrs Gandhi sent the *swami* He flew there in his plane and just managed to calm Sanjay down

It seems that Rajiv his brother sitting in Delhi and watching with concern, realized that something drastic was needed to save the situation He went to P N Dhar What if Sanjay were thrown out of the party as a face saving gesture? That would have an impact Dhar contacted the PM on her tours She seemed to agree When she returned she found that apparently Sanjay would not fall in The fear was that if Sanjay won many Congress members of parliament might walk out thinking that his presence in parliament would reduce them to zero Three or four days before the poll there was some discussion that Ban i Lal should be thrown out and Sanjay a ked to resign from Amethi. But this was also not carried through

Indira Gandhi was desperate She asked the president, who was on a trip to Malaysia to return He had to sign the notification

for the elections She rushed to him for advice It was 10 pm and Begum Abida is supposed to have said he had retired for the night ' It s urgent," Mrs Gandhi is supposed to have said When she saw the president he is said to have remarked that she shouldn't behave like a child ' We can talk tomorrow, he said

The next morning at 6 Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was dead He didn't die of a heart attack," said Shafi Ahmed Qureshi former union minister of state for railways, a while later in a speech filled with emotion ' He died of a broken heart '

Indira Gandhi had reached a state in her mental make up which I am convinced could have taken her along to martial law, had she found circumstances more propitious She knew the navy s role did not matter much The air force could be considered but it was still not the material wing of the military to help her maintain her rule It was the army which was crucial During the Bangladesh war Field Marshal S H F J Maneckshaw had felt how unfortunate it was that there was no unitary system of command in the political leadership He had told me that during a war the PM should be in sole command This applied to the army even more with its variegated composition She knew that General T N Raina was too non political to be drawn into the political arena Once the army tasted blood there would be no way to control it

On 20 March, even before the results came in declaring a complete rout of the Congress the news of Indira Gandhi s own defeat in Rae Bareli set a different course in modern Indian history

Indira Gandhi did not resign for two days On 22 March a sleek Toyota car was seen being packed with tins presumably containing money Part of the election money had been distributed to the contestants for the election from 2 Kushak Road, where a solid fence had assured privacy and security Here every day, one tin would be brought from 1 Safdarjung Road, opened and the cash distributed by P C Sethi for two hours to the politically needy

The little Toyota was making sure that the money would survive to fight another battle one day Indira Gandhi was not the kind to give up

Appendix

U V There are so many stories about your fondness for alcohol

S G Well, I don t drink at all Not only alcohol, not even Coca Cola Limca Fanta, or any of these things So, I don t see how I could be accused of drinking

U V How would you really explain the rumours about fast living?

S G I don t know because I hardly ever go even to a hotel I mean at most I might go once a year and that too, to see somebody In the beginning when I first started on Maruti in 1967, I was usually working at least sixteen hours a day more often eighteen When I had this work shop at Gulabi Bagh I used to go at about 8 o clock and I usually came back at 9 o clock every night—then I d do my paper work I mean for five or six years I don t even think I ve been out for a dinner or a party or anything Recently I had been working a little less but still around twelve hours That didn t leave very much time for fast living!

U V Why do you think gossip feeds on you so much and not your brother, Rajiv, for instance?

S G Because what I'm doing is more controversial If they want to say something about my brother, they d say he got in by pull Well, alright, he got in by pull what after that? Nothing But about me they can keep on and on saying things

U V There have been stories about you since childhood specially the one in which you were supposed to be one of a gang of spirited young friends who stole cars for a lark

S G At the time that I was accused of stealing cars I was in Kashmir I had been there I think about two months before that Immediately afterwards, by the time this rumour had caught on I was in England I couldn't have done much car stealing in Delhi while I wasn t even here!

U V But you have been, what shall I say, volatile and high spirited all through as a person Has that brought you into clash with the PM, your mother?

S G I ve never been in clash with my mother I ve held some views and she s held different views I don t think that implies a clash that s a difference of opinion so what? I mean I ve had a difference of opinion with thousands of others But what s that got to do with a clash or any thing like that

U V But what would you say is your equation with your mother?

S G Well I'm not sure how exactly I would classify it

U V Did you say you have heated arguments with your mother at all?

S G I ve never had a heated argument I ve had lots of arguments because I m quite argumentative anyway Nothing to do with having a row

U V Does she listen to your views or give you a hearing on issues that matter?

S G Yes obviously, she listens to my views She listened to them even when I was five years old, but that doesn t mean she does everything I say

U V Is it a relationship of friendship?

S G To some extent yes

U V You don't feel inhibited talking to her

S G No, not at all

U V And she doesn t discourage you from expressing yourself?

S G No not at all But it s not necessary that I should say what she says It s possible that my brother could say something else That turns it into a discussion, that s all

U V A foreign correspondent has gone to the extent of saying your mother is afraid of you I ve heard that you ve even got a file on her!

S G I think that s quite ridiculous What could I have on the file and what use would the file be to me! Most of these rumours are politically motivated They want to build a kind of public impression either to try and show that the government as a power is being run by odd bits of advice from here and there or that everything is absolutely hare brained I don t think any sensible person would pay attention to such things

U V Would you say that people who believe this are people who want to believe this?

S G I don't think anybody apart from a lunatic fringe actually believes this, and that too because they think it makes nice copy How many mothers in India would believe such a story about a son being violently defiant? How many would think it's possible?

U V Because they think that the power circle has a different code altogether, like the empires of old with queens who murdered and sons who angled for thrones

S G But we don't have a dynasty system here If it means anybody could angle for a position, well, I couldn't angle for it this way Even if I did anything in this manner, it would be the surest way to get out rather than get in

U V Is it true that you went ahead with Maruti in spite of her objections?

S G When I started Maruti, I started it in such a small way I don t think anybody could have objected to it. By the time I got anywhere I had already been working on it for about five years, so that at that stage to object to it wouldn t have made any sense

U V Well, when people think of Maruti, they mean when you actually set up the factory and how that became the

subject of Opposition charges So at that stage did she think that you might give it up?

S G No, I don t think so I had already been on the project for a number of years so it was hardly likely that I should give it up half way through And if I did give it up half way through it would just be proving that there was something wrong and that s why I gave it up

U V Have you been able to derive extra advantages in running the project because you are the PM's son?

S G Well for about three years parliament has been trying to probe into every aspect of Maruti If there was the slightest advantage I derived extra or not they would have got it out, and they would have really thrown it up

U V Would you say that the people who you have had to deal with being aware of who you are, have done things more speedily for you or have you found that there have been impediments put in your path for other reasons?

S G Well generally I ve found that they don t have the intention to put any impediments in my path but because of all this controversy in parliament they re scared to do anything for me Yet because of my position they re scared of doing anything against me so they leave every thing pending!

U V Is that one of the reasons Maruti has been delayed?

S G It helped

U V To delay it?

S G Yes

U V Any example?

S G Well it s like the allotment of materials Most of our materials we bought in the open market I can think of very few industrialists that have to do this, large indus trialists that is who had to get all their building materials and other material they needed in the open market

U V There are rumours that you got large quotas of cement and steel and even sold them off because you didn t need them

S G We ve got bills and receipts for large amounts of cement and steel that we ve bought from the open market We ve shown in our balance sheet that we have sold some scrap steel certainly not any of the controlled steel What

usually happens in companies is that whatever scrap or surplus steel there is, is sold privately and the proprietors pocket the money Our mistake was to be honest We sold it in the name of the factory and put the money also in the name of the factory! About our construction cost also—everybody is amazed as to why it is so low And the only reason why it s so low is that I've not pocketed anything from it Why the others' cost is so high is that they are always pocketing money in between while showing a higher cost of construction

U V Your factory covers a large area of 900,000 square feet Was it necessary for the project?

S G Initially we had envisaged to go in for a production of 50 000 cars Then all this petrol problem came in After that we've diversified a little bit We ve gone in for the manufacture of road rollers, we ve gone in for the manu facture of bus bodies, and the car For the three things combined the area is reasonable For only the car or the production that we re going in for now, it s not reasonable

U V What is the current position? When can you bring it out in the market, and how many?

S G We've started selling them Just now our production is very low We're making only seven or eight cars a month By next month this will go up to about fifteen cars gradually we ll be taking it up higher We re going up to 200 cars a day But in the current situation we might have to delay that a bit That is why we ve diversified into other lines, so that we use the capacity we ve got for other work as well

U V What is it that hampers you from going full speed ahead?

S G One is the market for money It is very tight The car industry is very capital intensive It is not labour intensive Banks are very reluctant to give money, the financial institutions are reluctant to give money

U V Even to you

S G More to me Apart from all this the car has been put in a very low priority sector That again hits us Not only us but the Ambassador and Fiat also The government is not bothered whether they run or not

U V Originally, the whole idea was to market a peoples' car That means the whole priority has gone haywire

S G Actually, you cannot have a people s car at 10 000 or even 5 000 in India The people, as such, cannot afford more than a cycle or a bus

U V One presumption is that you ll stop producing the car altogether and go in for making spare motor parts

S G The market for motor cars just now is very bad, so it would be even worse to make spare parts!

U V What are the major points in Maruti which make it a superior car to the others?

S G It is not a superior car It is a cheaper car For a lower cost you get more seating space it uses less fuel, and as far as cornering is concerned it will out corner either the Fiat or the Ambassador

U V But isn t there a fear of its overturning because it has a light body?

S G Much less The centre of gravity is lower, the suspension is very much more modern The ambassador is using a suspension design that has been running around since 1920 But apart from that there is nothing radically superior in the Maruti compared to the other cars

U V What makes it cheaper? You ve said you use more expensive material?

S G We use more expensive material, *but less of it*, because the car is designed at a lower weight The Ambassador weighs about 1,200 kilograms and the Maruti about 600 kilograms That s 600 kilograms less material that we have to pay for We use a lot more aluminium than they do Kilo for kilo aluminium is much more expensive than steel The cost of aluminium has really shot up After the emergency it's gone up by about three or four rupees a kilo Just before that it had gone up by four rupees a kilo Steel has gone up only eighty rupees a ton that is eight paise a kilo In fact another thing is that the black market price of steel is virtually the same as the controlled price now, while in aluminium the price is very high When we re making something we have to depend partially on the market

U V Has the Maruti got independent suspension?

SG Yes, it's got an independent suspension Altogether, it has a modern design Other cars we have here were designed in the fifties In so far as that is concerned, it has an advantage over them We ve also tested it over very rough ground We ve taken it for long runs at high speed, taken it for long runs in the *kaccha*, then it went to Ahmednagar, and there it did quite well They ve tested it with six people sitting in it all the time We ve been grilled by various people, particularly officials who always claim to know everything and one has to agree that they know everything!

UV I found that the car makes a lot of noise Is there some special reason for that?

SG The main reason is that it has an air cooled engine air cooled engines do make more noise than water cooled engines This is true even of cars like the Volkswagen which is a very highly developed western car The other thing is it s a two cylindered car, in two cylindered cars the noise is not as continuous and because it is an interrupted noise, you perceive it more

UV Would it cost more to remove it?

SG Well, you couldn t remove it completely Technically it's not possible

UV How does it use less fuel?

SG Because it's lighter It s lugging less weight around

UV While driving it I also found that the steering was extra ordinarily light

SG That was deliberate The heavier the steering the more you ll get fatigued driving it Initially if you re not used to a light steering you might think it's too light, but if you ve driven it even for two or three days and after that you drive a car with heavy steering you ll realize how lousy the heavy steering is

UV How have you been able to devise so much space at the back?

SG That is within the design.

UV Is the design made entirely by you?

SG Yes

UV Did you have any model in mind when you thought of the design?

S G No I just tried to get as much space in the smaller car as possible

U V About the price of the car Earlier I think you had said it would cost Rs 8,000

S G No, that has been wrongly reported The original price we had given was Rs 13,000 That has gone up to virtually double now because of the price hike in raw materials and the kind of materials we use as I said like aluminium The others don't use that at all But we would still be over 10 000 cheaper at Rs 25 000

U V On the road?

S G On the road

U V Who are the kind of people who have invested in your company and who are the major shareholders?

S G We don t have any major shareholder I don't know how you would define a major shareholder I d say a major shareholder should have much more than two or three per cent of the total and we don t have any such people

U V What is your total capital?

S G Total capital is now I think, just over two crores

U V Because your business viability is based on the cooperation of other businessmen does that make you, or the PM because of you vulnerable to pressures in other matters?

S G I have had virtually no cooperation from other business men In fact, we even had difficulties getting the ancil laries for our project But this is a commercial matter so there are a lot of other people who are willing to take up in their place

U V I mean, really about the businessmen who have bought shares in your company hoping that because of their association with you and through you the PM they would be able to get some favours in their own special businesses

S G Most of our shareholders are not businessmen That s why we have such a large number of shareholders and they have been victimised for it instead There was one person whose pay, I know, was five or six hundred a month He had bought shares with us for, I think a 1 000 rupees, and just for that he had his house searched three times, he was called for his income tax returns and

after that he came and saw me one day, and he told me Look I've bought your shares, but look at the mess you ve got me into '

There are a lot of attempts amongst a part of the bureaucracy, whether it was under pressure from opposition leaders or whatever but they played quite an active role in giving information against Maruti and one person even gave the order that every Maruti shareholder should have his tax arrears checked They did check and I think at that time when they did so we had about 600 or 700 shareholders and the total income tax arrears that they could rake up of 700 people was about 86 000 If any other company of that size is searched I don t think they could come off that clean

U V Who was behind these attempts at sabotaging the project, rival businessmen the bureaucracy or the politicians?

S G I think it would be rival business to some extent, but very much more it is the politicians and part of the bureaucracy

U V As a businessman yourself do you think big business houses should be curtailed from further expansion and do you believe in a controlled economy?

S G Well in a controlled economy actually it is only the big business houses that expand because they are the people who have the resources and the capability of getting around all the controls It is the smaller fellow who can t get around the controls so he s the fellow who gets hit!

U V But theoretically doesn t a controlled economy imply

S G I agree it implies the opposite But in practice that s what s been happening In India if the small fellow wants to start it s very difficult for him while if a big person wants to start he s already got everything laid out

U V How do you think that can be changed?

S G I would say if you remove all the controls it would virtually finish off the big businessmen They are the ones who create this lobby to keep the controls It's partly the big businessmen and partly the bureaucracy because this is what gives the bureaucracy patronage and money

U V Would you opt then for private enterprise?

S G I would think that would be the quickest way to grow I agree it s a controversial point Well, you see, everybody thinks we have the controls to control the big businessmen Well, in the past twenty years who ve grown, the big businessmen or the small businessmen? So what are the controls doing? They re just consolidating the big business men Publicly they argue for less control and privately they finance for more control We ve come to a stage when big businessmen always say—look there s nobody else to do it Well, obviously nobody else can because they can t get through the red tape

U V Do you think this happened because the economy was half controlled?

S G I think the totally controlled sector of economy is what we re pouring all our taxes into to keep it running some how or the other

U V How do you visualize society in which equality can be established?

S G I think you should use the efficiency of the private sector and use other means of channelizing it You can make them increase the wages You can make them give the workers shares in the company You can do a million other things, but the expertise and the hard work that they have you ll never get in a pubic sector The public sector cannot afford welfare projects The private sector can afford it, you force them to do it Even if you tell them here is this whole ninety eight per cent (of which fifty per cent you otherwise give to the government), you spend forty eight per cent on welfare projects they ll gladly do it Because this is something they would have control over They can see it and say, this is what I have done They ll be glad to do it But if you tell them hand it over to us and that this is going to subsidize the inefficiency of the public sector—who wants to do that! In UP the power generation is terrible There s the Birla unit in which generation is over ninety per cent or around ninety five per cent Next to that is a public sector unit whose generation has not gone over thirty six per cent I think the managers there should be taken out and shot!

U V You wouldn t believe in nationalizing any sector?

SG No, not at all Take coal When coal was nationalized it was selling for, I think, thirty five rupees a tonne They were making a profit Now we re getting coal at about ninety rupees a tonne and they re running a loss of over a hundred crores a year One thing is that the citizens are being made to pay ninety rupees a ton and the second thing is they're also being made to pay for the loss of a hundred plus crores a year It is the bureaucracy which gets all the advantage

UV What should be done then, according to you, to bring about economic viability?

SG Well, one method is to remove black marketing The best way is to lessen the tax Like last year they made it less a little less The finance ministry made a lot of noise that they'd suffer a loss of fifty crores It s a year now and the result is that they've gained forty five crores instead! Suppose a person is earning a lot OK, you can say he is a nasty fellow and shouldn t earn so much But if he is earning it he thinks he deserves to earn it Whether he does or not is arguable, that s a moot point, but he thinks he deserves it He thinks he deserves it so he doesn t think he deserves to pay a ninety five per cent to the government, which under the previous system of taxation, people were paying Over a hundred per cent of their income which means they were going into a net loss I don't believe anybody would be honest if he has to pay more than his earnings Anybody would be a cheat So you re forcing a person to be a cheat Under the current laws it s come down from 109 to ninety eight There again so many people will say, I m not going into a loss so I ll pay it But most people I think would again say, why should I pay ninety eight per cent to the government, I mean, what s the government doing for me that I should pay ninety eight per cent Most of such people are businessmen they are earning and they see things like this like the coal mine—that the government takes it over from thirty five the cost jumps to ninety and then it runs up a loss of a hundred crores So they say when I pay ninety eight per cent, it goes towards financing the in efficiency of the government so why should I pay it?

U V Basically it means you are against the public sector, or its functioning anyway

S G I think a public sector should function only in competition with the private sector, and where it cannot function in competition with the private sector it should be allowed to die a natural death

U V Government could run certain sections

S G Why should government run them? Why not let the private sector run them and let the government have control over them? I mean they can say you can function under these guidelines Put all the controls you like but use their expertise

U V And make them sponsor certain projects

S G Most of the private sector people if they can stick their names on a project they re quite happy with the rest I mean, like Tatas don t own Tatas, and Birlas do not own Birlas But the units have their names they get their profits and they re happy so its OK

U V What kind of things do you visualize that the private sector should be made to do?

S G One thing I think is that they can give more shares to the workers so the workers feel as though they also own the plant If there is a loss it would make a difference to the income of the worker If a substantial part of his income comes from his shareholding then if he goes on strike he knows that at the end of the year he is not going to get his dividend That ll make him more interested in generating more production You can also give him housing and other amenities but those things are not as effective an incentive to production If he s got an actual stake in the company that gives him the biggest interest in higher production and a higher profit for the company

U V How can government ensure that the private sector does this? What are the methods one could use to pressurize them into doing this?

S G I think they can easily be told that such and such percentage of the profit should be given as shares to the workers

U V And if they don t do it what happens?

S G There would be a law that they do it How can they not

do it? I mean it s the government s duty to ensure that the laws are obeyed

U V What about the scheme to induct private sector experts into corporations as managing directors?

S G It's mostly the crooks that are willing to come—if I get 12,000 a month from the company well I don t believe there are many businessmen who are that patriotic to give up 12 000 and come to earn 3,000 to run a public sector unit If they are coming here to earn 3 000 they are making damn sure they re getting compensation from somewhere else and a lot more

U V How do you think the limit of investment level can be increased?

S G Until the last lot of financial measures were brought in the investment situation was good—anything that came in the market was over subscribed It is only the current measures which are not conducive to growth The biggest hurdle they say is lack of electricity and the credit squeeze I think the credit squeeze could be relaxed for the manu facturing part of the industry and it need not be relaxed for the traders because the hoarding is done genertly the trade In fact recently there was a survey done to see who does the most hoarding and it was found that the people who do the most hoarding are all the government com panies Because they are not interested and they can afford to suffer a loss, they just don t give a damn

U V How would you suggest that the prices be brought down?

S G Production If production is increased prices have to fall Why don t people in Europe and America hoard? Because the production is so large that if I start hoarding brand X brand Y will take over the market of brand X and brand X will become redundant That is the only situation where you can genuinely control the prices In all other situations you can t really control the prices

U V Do you feel that the opportunities that a citizen seeks are possible of fulfilment within a democratic framework?

S G I believe in a democracy but democracy doesn t mean the freedom to destroy everything there is in a country Democracy means the freedom to build a country

U V What hampers the building of this country?

S G Well, say a call to the army that they should not obey orders—telling students they should give up their studies and agitate, burning buses, breaking windows, sabotaging railway trains This is helping nothing

U V Would you opt then for a system in which the opposition does not get this much of a chance?

S G In India, effectively, there s been only a one party system The basic reason for that one party—the Congress—being everywhere and not being able to be defeated was that the opposition was so irresponsible I know a lot of people that vote Congress because they say, look we re not communists, so we re not going to vote communist, while the others are such a bunch of rabble, we re not going to vote for them either, so we ve no choice but to vote for the Congress If there were a responsible second party I think a lot of people would vote for it

U V What prevents the growth of such a responsible opposition party in your opinion?

S G The members of the opposition parties! Like when the Swatantra Party was formed some people thought look here s a good alternative, a lot of people voted for it until they saw what a hoax it was it was just a foreign sponsored party As soon as they saw this, the Swatantra Party collapsed

U V Do you believe that a party should be cadre based?

S G Yes it should Because one of the main things hampering the Congress is that it has a lot of leaders and not enough people who could go down to the grassroots to do some work I think the most important thing in the party is the worker or cadre, call it by either name In the Congress the worker is the most ignored person, while he s actually the base of the party

U V The Jan Sangh and the Communist Party are cadre based How would you have the Congress restructed in a different way?

S G I don t believe the Jan Sangh is a cadre based party I know how it functions in Delhi In Delhi it was a favour based party It did favours for people and it based itself on that That is not a cadre The communists may have a small cadre that actually works but if you take all the

people in the Communist Party, the big wigs—even the not so-big wigs—I don t think you d find a richer or more corrupt people anywhere

UV Then what do you mean by a cadre? A paid worker?

SG No, not a paid worker, but a sincere worker I think the worker should get some recognition for his work, and one should try and build up the worker rather than the leader ship which keeps coming in from on top The worker remains where he is he never gets a chance to come up

UV Which means basically you would strive for a system where the worker eventually becomes the leader

SG Yes, I would, so the worker has something to aspire to In the current system, even outside the Congress, in the Indian system, the worker remains the worker while the leader starts as a leader and ends up as a leader That is what is wrong with the system

UV If you were given a chance to restructure the working as a Congressman

SG I'm not a member of the Congress Party

UV But if you could, would you be able to do it without inviting a lot of resentment?

SG It would invite a lot of resentment—obviously if the workers are going to come up into the leadership, the leadership has to make way for them Any leader any where wouldn t like to give up what he s got Everybody likes to hang on to what they've got A lot of people think of the concept, they talk about it, then they suddenly realize that it might interfere with what they ve got, their own little kingdom, so they abandon the concept As long as they're only talking about it, they feel safe.

UV In 1971, you did enter the political field in a certain way, electioneering and making speeches and working in the slum areas After that there was a gap Why?

SG I was busy with my car

UV Now again you re taking a comparatively greater interest Is that because the car project has not got going?

SG No Like in 1971, there was need for some work to be done so I did it When it was done I left it. So when there is need for some work to be done now, I'd do it and when its over I d leave it

U V That means you're not basically interested in politic as such?

S G Basically, I m interested but I ve got other commitments *and I have to fulfil those*

U V The car?

S G The car

U V But do you think the children of people in power should keep aloof from their field altogether?

S G I don t think a person should keep aloof from any field because of a relationship A person does work because he thinks he has a flair for it or he s good at the job or because he s interested in it The criteria should be one s capacity to work rather than a relationship

U V After your marriage you ve been observing the same hours in the factory?

S G Yes

U V And still not socializing at all?

S G Yes

U V But isn t that leading what I would call almost an ascetic s life?

S G Well it depends I haven t met any ascetics so I couldn't really say!

July 28

Sanjay Gandhi's Interview

Both PTI and UNI stories on Sanjay Gandhi's interview to Mrs Uma Vasudev for Surge cancelled and withdrawn at 8-45 p m though some papers had already published it

Mr Gandhi pleaded for more of free enterprise and lashed out at the CPI

with eminent leaders of the Congress Party and the Janata Party top officials of the Centre and state administrations and central and regional party bosses—Chandra Shekhar Chavan Jagjivan Ram Bahuguna D K Barooah Siddhartha Shankar Ray R K Dhawan Om Mehta Dinesh Singh Mohammad Yunus Chandrajit Yadav N D Tiwari D P Mishra Brahmananda Reddy L K Advani *Shiv Charan Gupta Yashpal* Kapoor Rajni Patel Prem Sagar Gupta and a host of others

The book unravels the structures of an absolute power weilded by an absolute ego which crippled absolutely Indira Gandhi as the author says lost to nobody *She lost to herself*



A well known columnist critic author and editor of *Surge International* (a magazine of politics and the arts) Uma Vasudev studied at Christ Church College Simla Miranda House University of Delhi and University College University of London

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